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THE GREAT APPEAL

By JAMES G. K. McCLURE

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THE GREAT APPEAL

BY
JAMES G. K. McCLURE

PRESIDENT OF LAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY



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A Word of Preparation

The desire of God is toward the children of men. That desire broods over human lives and seeks a happy, cordial relation between them and God. It even expresses itself in an appeal to them to come into blessed fellowship with Himself. It is that appeal, in several of its declarations, that is set forth in the following pages. No one page exhausts that appeal nor fully portrays it. It is the book as a whole that attempts to indicate the nature and the extent of that appeal.

The writer realizes that while he distributes the different parts of the human spirit as though each occupied a place entirely by itself, the fact is that the human spirit is a unit, and all its parts are inter-related, each part operating in connection with every other part, and no one part being uninfluenced by the others.

A Word of Preparation

May this book bring to every reader the question, "What more could God have done that He has not done to draw me to Himself?" And may it also lead every reader to answer to God's appeal with the dedication of his life to the service and the joys of God.

JAMES G. K. MCCLURE.

Lake Forest, Ill.

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The Appeal to the Intellect

In all the earth there is nothing so wonderful as the human mind. The first expressions of that mind, in a little child, startle and interest us; the final expressions of that mind, in the wisest sage, astound and enthrall us. The mere machinery itself of the mind is amazing; the product furnished by that machinery is still more amazing.

It is this intellectual faculty wherewith we know, reason, and pass judgment, that works all the marvels of progress, transforming rudeness into refinement and confusion into order. The intellect writes the verses that inspire to heroism, paints the canvases that are admired for a thousand years, spans rivers, unites continents, and even climbs above the clouds. The educated traveler, in the heart of Africa, cuts lines upon a chip and handing the chip to an untaught barbarian bids him carry it to a distant friend. The friend sends back

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the articles that the chip's lines call for, and the barbarian stands aghast before "the chip that can talk."

But what a display of intellect, as compared to "the chip that can talk," is seen when Michael Angelo plans and erects such a building as St. Peter's Church at Rome, with all its magnitude and all its delicacy, all its painting and all its sculpture! When Champollion takes the figures of birds, beetles, and twisted forms painted upon the walls of Egyptian tombs, and by sheer mental force constructs a key that unlocks the mystery of them all, and thus reduces them to a language! When the secrets of electricity are brought out of the hiding-places where they have been undiscovered for centuries, and are laid at our feet for use so that we can speak in intelligible words around the whole earth in small moments of time! When a star is detected whose light requires hundreds of years to reach our eyes, and we can study its place and its motion!

In view of what the intellect can do, seeing straight through mountains that are miles in thickness, and healing diseases that have always been incurable, it is not surprising that there is such a thing as

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"pride of intellect." A mind that can accumulate great reservoirs of historic knowledge so as to be an encyclopædia in information; that can read and even speak the languages of a score of diverse nations; that is so disciplined, alert, ready, that it fears no question of business nor of military campaign, no problem of scientific nor of philosophic investigation, is indeed an object of wonderment to its possessor and of wonderment to others. People of all races have paid homage to mind. Because Demosthenes could speak such stirring words as roused the populace from lethargy to valorous action, and because Pericles could surmount the Acropolis with such a Parthenon as enraptured men in all ages, Greece revered Demosthenes and Pericles as her permanent heroes. Physical force impresses a few onlookers for the time: mental force impresses vast multitudes for all time. Material wealth has a glitter in its day, but its day is brief; mental wealth shines on forever. History devotes ten lines to the mere millionaire, if it mentions him at all, while it devotes a hundred lines to the intellectual giant whom it is its delight to mention.

It is to this intellect in man, this know-

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ing, reasoning, judging faculty, that God first addresses Himself in all His intercourse with man. The assertion that God's religion is a thing of feeling and fancies, a mere sentimentality with which the mind, the reason, the discriminating judgment have nothing whatever to do, is made without reference to the true facts of the case.

The true facts are that the heart is never asked to worship "while the brain denies"; nor is the heart ever asked "to strangle reason that faith may be able to believe." Rather is it the case, that every precept and every instruction are presented first and directly to man's intellect; and it is on the basis of man's rationality and of the thought-workings of that rationality that God unvaryingly appeals to man for obedience and service. Ignorance in man is a hindrance, not a help to God in drawing nigh to man. The more intellect a man has the more God expects His appeal to reach and impress him. God can and does speak intelligibly to the weakest intellect; He has words and facts that He can use in talking with the youngest child. But the stronger the intellect, the larger the words and the stouter the facts He presents, and He looks to Humboldt to trust in Him as

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much—yes, more—than He looks to Joan of Arc.

The presence of this appeal by God to the intellect is in contrast with the absence of appeal by pagan deities to the intellect. Much of every idolatrous religion is recognized by its very advocates to be false and inadequate. Lying imposition eventually breaks down when men become discriminating: acute intellects are sure to puncture the veil of deceit. Paganism, therefore, makes no essential appeal to the intellect, because no man can be a wise man, a man of information and of keen reasoning power, and still give unqualified allegiance to what is false and insufficient. He may believe that it is best to leave the religion of his race unchallenged before the public, fearing lest his race shall become wholly irreverent and lawless if the restraints of their religion are withdrawn; but he himself will not and cannot be persuaded to believe the lie. He avers that it is the province of the intellect to scrutinize every religion, whatever name it may bear or in whatever clime it may originate, and then after scrutiny to pronounce upon it and assert whether it is worthy or unworthy in the estimation of the intellect.

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Even those statements of religion that claim to express the appeal of God Himself need to be studied with the keenest intellectuality. There is, it is true, but one Bible, one "word of God written"; but the phrases of that Bible have been misquoted and misused until in many instances they have been made to misrepresent the appeal of God. When in the early centuries the attempt prevailed to marry Christianity and pagan religions, preserving Christian names while retaining ideas that were precious to paganism, the marriage compromised Christianity and associated with it teachings that have no sanction from the God of Scripture. This man-made system, thus contrived, does not represent God's appeal; God never requires a blind allegiance to any mummery, to any priesthood, to any church. No one is to hand over his religion to another whom he considers to be less intellectual in religious penetration than himself. Flaws in arguments and breaks in logical processes are to be noted, not disregarded, whoever makes them and wherever they are made. Non-essentials are not essentials, and are not to be received as such. If an angel teach a different word than that of God

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Himself, it is not God's appeal, and no one is asked by God to receive it. God's appeal has nothing whatever to do with hundreds of the matters that cause what are called "the denominational distinctions of Christendom." God would have the intellect brush them all aside as creations of time and not of eternity, as not from Him, and would have the intellect fasten its vision on His single appeal, to accept Him as King and receive Him as Friend.

When God makes His own appeal to man's intellect He does so first, through nature. Before the child is able to read the writing of man, God confronts him with the material creation. God spreads abroad the heavens, marshals sun, moon, and stars in their procession, breaks courses for rivers, places bounds to the sea, orders the recurrence of the seasons. He causes all these forms of nature to be seen and noticed by the child.

Straightway the child in his mind begins to ask the questions: "Who made the moon and sea?" "Where did they come from?" The mind is thus summoned to a course of investigation, and summoned, if possible, through such investigation to find an answer to its questions.

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That answer can be obtained only through an intellectual process. To this end, that we may obtain the answer, God bids us exhaust every resource of investigation, to observe, to analyze, to compare. He calls attention to the *beauty* of nature, as He shows the mind the flower of the field and the sunset cloud of the sky. He asks the mind to note the *order* of nature, as the centuries move on and still the planets keep their motion and the earth swings securely about the sun. He directs attention to the *adaptation* of nature, as the bird is found to be equipped for movement through air and the fish for movement through water. He causes the intellect to heed the *extent* of nature, as the microscope finds infinitesimal molecular life and the telescope detects the stars hidden millions of miles away in the depths of seemingly infinite space. He asks that the *force* of nature be pondered, as the cyclone crashes through forests and through city, and the lightning splinters the loftiest oak.

The more we know of nature the more its wonders, beauties, energies impress us; the more we know of it the more earnestly it speaks, and forces the question, "Whose handiwork is this?" Investigation into

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nature's laws often explains a phenomenon and makes clear a mystery. But every explained phenomenon only widens the domain of the unexplained; the ocean grows broader as we move away from the shore. The little grove at Delphi that investigated would reveal all secrets, becomes, as we press into it, a limitless forest whose borders only have been skirted and whose depths no one seems capable of penetrating. Science makes nature greater every new year. Each newly discovered force, each newly discovered law declares the more impressively the glory and the grandeur of nature. Nature is vast, nature is tremendous, nature is well-nigh omnipotent, and is certainly exhaustless.

Placing Himself beside man, underneath nature's heavens and amid all the objects those heavens look down upon, the God of nature speaks to man, and says: "Lift up your eyes on high and see! Who hath created these things?" "Yes, who hath created them?" man's mind answers back, a very echo of the question put by God. Then God declares who hath created them: "I that bringeth out their hosts by number, I that calleth them all by names, the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the

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ends of the earth, who giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might increaseth strength, even I created these things; and I ask you in your weakness to wait upon my might as helplessness waits upon power, and to let my resources be your protection."

Thus having spoken to the intellect through nature, God proceeds to speak to the intellect through Scripture. His religion is distinctively and peculiarly a book-religion. Other religions have their sacred books, but those books are brief and disjointed compared to the Bible, with its "great extent, immense variety, and organic connection." Each and every part of the Bible is addressed directly to man's mind. The first sentence in it is an answer to the first question asked by the intellect as it looks on nature and wonderfully queries who made the heavens and the earth: "God created the heavens and the earth." Beginning with that first statement, Scripture straightway proceeds to show forth God's power, God's wisdom, and God's goodness; and then, having declared the worthy character of the God of nature, and having declared, too, His providence in all the affairs of men, calls,

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page by page through all its record, to the mind of man to consider the blessedness of obedience to His will, and the sorrow of disobedience. It never asks for faith, except on the basis of information already given. If God charges Abraham to leave his native land and go out he knoweth not whither, He charges this on the ground that Abraham already knows God to be so wise and good that only a wise and good command ever could emanate from Him.

The province of faith always is to rest its feet upon known facts. Faith is never to be senseless nor unintelligent. No man can exercise Scriptural faith except as he is a thinker. Evidence is to be examined; proofs to be weighed. God never requires us to do anything that is unreasonable. We may not at the moment see the benefit that will result to ourselves or to others from obedience to His will in some special matter; but He never asks us to be obedient until after He has assured us, and shown us, that His will is perfect. That a matter appears to be beyond reason does not make it contrary to reason. We are never charged by God to accept the man-made philosophies that are alleged deductions from Scripture, nor are any special

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formulas concerning God's justice, or even concerning Christ's atonement, singled out by Him and made mandatory upon our convictions. Such philosophies and formulas may have been helpful to the welfare of God's religion in the centuries; but hurtful or helpful, they are not made of the essence of faith. Every one of God's distinct commands, and every one of God's distinct promises, is presented to the human mind on grounds that are reasonable to that mind.

The very mystery of Scripture is a part of God's appeal through Scripture to our reason. He purposely leaves some portions of His Word obscure to one generation that another generation may have the pleasure and profit of clearing them up. The human mind cannot be strong apart from exercise and discipline. Had one set of men conquered all the meaning in Scripture, there would be no intellectual arena left in it for any other set. Accordingly it is from time to time that God uncovers the meaning of Scripture, calling attention by excavations in each new generation to the fulfillment of predictions, lighting up enigmatical passages by modern exploration and study, always stimulating the best

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intellectual thought of the day by the problems of Scripture, and always giving diligent minds the delight of making discoveries of truth; and still always keeping back in the shadow so much yet unknown as furnishes opportunity for investigation to the minds of another generation. Honest, intelligent distrust of the God of Scripture necessarily changes its questionings every few years. Much criticism that was entertained half a century ago has now been answered. The light of new thought and new information constantly makes some of God's scripturally recorded dealings that once were characterized as unfair, seem so worthy and so necessary, that God stands forth from Scripture increasingly beautiful as time goes on. Time is always on the side of God.

Even if it be impossible to fully comprehend the God of Scripture, is not the fact of our inability to fully comprehend Him a forceful appeal to our reason for accepting and obeying Him? The human mind is of such a nature that it would not be willing to own allegiance to a God so small that He could be absolutely comprehended by it. The human mind cannot be checked in its range by walls of years; it

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leaps them. Time itself, one billion of years if you please, is not enough for the mind of man. It sweeps on, and on, and on. It wishes limitless space, limitless time. It wishes a limitless God, a God so great that to think of Him must stretch the mind and broaden the intellect. No thought has ever done so much to widen and develop the human intellect as the thought of the boundless God of Scripture, the all-powerful, the all-knowing, the all-holy, the ever-living, ever-loving God. The thought of such a God expands every mind in which it dwells. The greatest minds become even greater by thinking about God. "I, even I alone," the God of Scripture says, "answer to the capacity and nature of the human mind, and therefore I make my appeal to be the mind's King and Friend."

And now God makes His third appeal to the intellect, and this time through the person of Jesus Christ. Christ was His chosen messenger, who was to speak, labor, and live as His very voice. The declaration, "This is my beloved Son; hear Him," indicated Christ to be the mouthpiece, the exponent, the manifestation of God.

Christ appealed to the minds of men by

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His *words*. Every one of them was rational, every one of them was wise. Though He taught for three years, sometimes in private and sometimes in public, sometimes before His friends and sometimes before His foes, He never gave expression to one unwise thought; He said nothing that past experience then could gainsay, nothing that past experience now can gainsay. "Never man spake as this man" was the judgment of His own generation, and it is the judgment of every succeeding generation. He claimed that every word was absolute truth concerning the subject treated; and all history since His day corroborates His claim. More and more it is evident that what Christ said is the solution of all domestic, social, and governmental problems. The individual, the home, the community that lives His words finds them to be fully and always the truth.

Christ also appealed to the minds of men by His *miracles*. Those miracles were done openly, in the presence of the intellect, and it was always the intellect that was asked to ponder them and their mission. Many of Christ's words so commended themselves to man's intellect at the time they were spoken, that they needed no corroboration.

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rative testimony, no help to make them impressive. But there were words spoken by Christ that dealt with matters lying beyond all human knowledge, matters of immortality and of the nature of God's love. To speak of such matters was to make a revelation, to declare the unknown. It was necessary that attention be called to the words themselves and to the teacher of them, in some way that would arouse and hold thought. Miracles were means to an end: the telescope for the seeing of the stars. But as means they made a direct appeal to men's minds; an appeal to consider that what Christ said of God's love was true, as miracle after miracle set forth the tender, forgiving, welcoming nature of God; an appeal to consider that what Christ said of immortality was true, as the raising from the dead of the child, of the youth, of the man, of Himself through His own inherent power, made life beyond death so credible. Corroborative testimony, in addition to words of revelation and of promise, was needed, and through miracles that testimony was given to man's intellect.

Christ's supreme appeal to the minds of men was through His *character*. Words and miracles alike called attention to *Him*.

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The great question He presented to the intellect was Himself: in birth a narrow Jew, but in nature a brother to all humanity; a provincial in education, but a sage knowing the life of the whole world; a peasant, but a king; meek, but authoritative over life and over death; gentle, but majestic; dying to live; yielding to conquer; a man, but a God. No such as He has ever been seen; He fulfilled in Himself all righteousness, He was perfect in purity, charity, kindness, justice, happiness. All mankind find in Him their ideal; all mankind find in Him their helper. As the years of His life go on, and we study them, so wondrous, so superior to mere flesh and blood does He Himself appear, that for such an one to enter the grave and conquer it becomes so natural an event that we may even anticipate it. Certainly such an one had life in Himself so abundantly that "He could not be holden by death." "Come unto the Father, unto my Father, and your Father; come to His safety, His peace, His immortality," is the appeal that He quietly but unceasingly makes to every thoughtful man.

The God of Scripture *satisfies* the intellect. He answers its questions. He tells

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who it was that brought about creation, and why; He tells what man's relation to God is, made in His very image; He tells what man's place is to be in the future, when man, restored to the very likeness of God, is to dwell with Him in peace forever. He even assures the intellect that "what it knows not now, it shall know hereafter," that clouds are to give way to light, and man "shall know even as he is known." He opens before the intellect the opportunity of an ever-broadening vision and an ever-increasing comprehension as the years of a blessed eternity move on.

So sure is God that His appeal to the intellect is convincing, is mastering, that He even asks that intellect to *love* Him. Cold, judicial, as the intellect is, such is God's belief in His power to impress it favorably and rouse it into warmth of enthusiasm that He bids men "love" Him "with all the mind." He wishes the keenest scrutiny, the sharpest penetration, the deepest insight to center upon Him; He does not fear them, He welcomes them all. That love is safest, He knows, that is wisest. That love will have least disappointment, He realizes, that is based on surest and completest knowledge. "Know Me," he

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says, "know Me thoroughly and closely, keep knowing Me, until intellectual admiration shall become intellectual passion, until the cold mind shall glow, and the sober reason flame forth, and the calm judgment burn at white heat—the white heat of love."

The appeal of God needs intellectual honesty on man's part if it is to be seen as it actually is. Truth never enters a barred mind. Do you know aught of duty? Live that duty. Present knowledge is a gift to be used in action; future knowledge waits on that action, and comes only when known duty is done. To the degree that the mind knows God, let it obey God; and if it so obey, it shall grow in knowledge as surely as God is truth.

The Appeal to the Heart

A blind orphan child was once asked the question, "What is the heart?" Placing his hand over his chest, he replied, "That which aches so!" To him, the blind orphan boy whose life had lacked so many joys, the human heart was the element within him that could be lonely, could grieve, could know the pain of being neglected, as well as the gladness of being loved.

This attempt at a definition of the heart is suggestive. Within every human being there is something that desires the *interest* of others; it wishes their thought, their solicitous attention. It wishes their *sympathy*, too, their sorrow in its sorrow, and their gladness in its gladness. It wishes *comfort* also, so that it may be helped in times of difficulty and discouragement. And it wishes *friendship*, that comradeship that makes it feel the strengthening influence of an unselfish presence at its side. And then it wishes *love*, genuine, abiding,

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forgiving love, that bears toward it only true and sweet solicitude. The human heart desires many other things; but it desires these preëminently. When these desires are unmet, the heart is very vacant; when they are met, the heart is very full.

Besides its capacity to receive interest, sympathy, comfort, friendship, and love, it has capacity to bestow them. When we know what the interest, sympathy, comfort, friendship, and love are that go forth from us toward others, we know what our heart is; their extent, their intensity, their constancy all indicate whether our heart is a great heart or a small heart. It is to this tender, affectionate, susceptible portion of our being that God makes appeal as He seeks our devotion.

There are two methods used by Him in His appeal: one is the negative method, the method of making the heart realize that no other object than Himself can meet its needs, the other the affirmative method, the method of presenting Himself as the satisfaction of all the desires of the heart.

In the use of the negative method He shows the heart that *things* cannot give it what it desires. He never allows outward, touchable, weighable things to make a

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heart continuously happy. There is not a child who has not sat down in the midst of abundance with a weary, lonely feeling of heart. This feeling comes like the wind; we do not know whence it cometh. There seems no especial reason for it; it is not because of any pain of body, any rebuff from an associate, any word of instruction upon the vanity of life. This feeling exists entirely independent of any exterior cause. At first it is a matter of surprise to the child that he is lonely in the midst of his abundance; he cannot understand his own feeling. He knows that he has the very objects that he desired, and that they are his to do with as he pleases. And still he is not happy! He may not always voice the questioning of his heart in the words, "What does this mean?" but he wonders at his disappointment, and he never forgets those hours in early life when the disappointment came.

In later years, when the child has become a man, he thinks about the experience more intelligently. He finds that come what may of exterior good into his life, that good does not rest and satisfy his heart. He is much like the infant child that may have softest blankets, and warm-

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est food, and many nurses at hand, but still is unhappy, and will be unhappy so long as the mother-heart for which he seems made, is absent. Every grown man realizes sooner or later that all the gold, and lands, and houses, and feasts he may have do not meet the desires of his heart. So soon as he looks away from his own experience to the experience of others he finds that every other human heart has felt or does feel exactly as he feels. A man like Crœsus has his money, but he declares himself unhappy. A man like Solomon has his splendor, but he keeps talking about the emptiness of life. A man like Beckwith has his palace, but he thinks by day and by night how lonely his heart is. Whenever, in any generation, in any land, under any circumstance, there has been an abundance of *things*, the man who had them did not have what his heart craved.

When we reason about this fact it becomes easy for us to understand it; how can it be possible for *things* to meet the need of that which wishes interest, sympathy, comfort, friendship, and love? The wanderer in the desert who, almost dead from thirst, came upon a pitcher from

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which he expected to drink refreshing water, and found that it was filled with diamonds and rubies, could not satisfy bodily thirst with jewels; all the jewels in the world would not, because they could not, relieve that thirst. No more can *things*, however precious, satisfy heart thirst; they never have, and they never will. Of this fact every one that thinks wisely becomes convinced, namely, that there must be water for bodily thirst, and there must be love and comfort for heart thirst.

Then there is a second use to which God puts His negative method: He shows the heart that no *person* other than Himself can give the heart what it desires, whether the person be a supposed divinity or an actual being. This failure to satisfy the heart is the failure of every god and goddess the world over. No divinity has ever been imagined whose character corresponded with the needs of the human heart. Jupiter had unbridled anger, Hermes was a cheat, Venus was impure; they were not deeply solicitous of mankind's true happiness, they could not be taken to the heart as friends. In spite of what a few leaders in Greece and Rome said in order to make the best of their sorry religious situation, the people

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of Greece and Rome believed that their gods were drunken, passionate, profligate, given to jealousy, lust, and war. Unrefined paganism makes its gods the enemies of human happiness, who must be bought off by sacrifices, else they will do harm; it makes the images of its gods hideous, and many of its temple rites revolting. Even the divinities of the Anglo-Saxons, Woden and Thor, were rough, harsh, reveling in battles and killing with hammers; they could never say "peace" to the heart when it was disquieted because of sin and weariness. Refined paganism endeavored to make some of its gods the friends of man, like Ceres, the god of the harvest, and endeavored, too, to make the images of its gods attractive, and the temples of its gods beautiful; the statue of Apollo was grace itself, and the flowers on his altar were as sweet as could be found. But no amount of art could cover up the lewdness of Ceres and the selfishness of Apollo, and when the human heart craved disinterested affection, and longed to give affection, it could not be satisfied, even with the best products of refinement. Murderers, thieves, adulterers, courtesans, went as freely to temples and altars as did the noblest men

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and the purest maidens. It is a fact of history that in those days when Tiberius was Caesar at Rome, and every accessible race of men had been sought, and every divinity that could be found had its worship in Rome, there was a feeling of disappointment in the heart of the people; their gods wearied them, distressed them, or repelled them. And to-day, when Buddhism exists as a corrective of Brahminism, and the Abbé Du Bois says, "Every Hindu procession presents me the image of hell," and "Hindu human sacrifices are frightful and appalling," there is still a failure in heathenism to give the heart what its sweet, pure affections desire. Now, as nineteen hundred years ago, the human heart searches the known world for some divinity other than God in whom it can have loving, restful, joyous confidence, and it searches in vain. The dove found no rest for the sole of her foot; the waters were on the face of the whole earth; her only rest was in God's ark.

Similarly, it is true that no *human* person can answer to all the needs of the heart. Friends do not always remain true; nor if they remain true, is it possible for them to be with us unceasingly, to understand us

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perfectly, to give the aid that we need, and to give it so that it comforts and quiets us. The human heart has secrets that only an omniscient eye can see; they are not always clearly defined to the heart itself, so that it can say what it feels and needs. There is a limitlessness to its cravings that makes it restless, even when earthly friends are many and are studious of its welfare; there are spaces in it which remain unoccupied and cannot be filled, even though multitudes do everything in their power to make us perfectly happy. In Dr. van Dyke's "Last Word," the noble Hermas and the devoted Athenais, his wife, have every earthly possession that they can crave, wealth of love from and to one another, as well as to their beautiful boy, a palace rich in treasures material, and a home life rich in treasures spiritual, in devotion, in truth, in sweet fellowship. But in the midst of all their joy they come to an hour when both are conscious that their hearts are not satisfied, that there is nothing more to be secured from one another or others that could satisfy their hearts; that they must let their hearts feel gratitude to some one greater than themselves who has given their hearts so much; that they

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must worship Him, must love Him, and must feel His love for them. But they do not know who He is! They place themselves before an altar. The altar has no image on it. They realize that infinitely great longings and infinitely great affections cannot be satisfied with less than an infinite object who is loving and lovable; but who is that Object? They cannot tell. They have lost the word "Christ" out of their knowledge and cannot speak it or feel its power. They are conscious of larger needs than can be met by any one less than God; but they are ignorant of Him! Like them, every human heart comes to know that there are cravings within it that no mother's unselfishness can answer, no wife's devotion can content, no friend's loyalty can quiet.

It is when God has thus made His appeal to us negatively, and has shown us that our hearts cannot be satisfied apart from Him, that He makes His appeal affirmatively, and assures us that He as friend and helper can give our hearts all that they wish. He does this through general declarations of his affection toward us, and through a special manifestation of that affection.

In a multitude of ways he declares that

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He cares for us tenderly, solicitously, patiently. So that we may feel the force of this care as thus cherished for us, God does two things: one, He teaches His own perfection, which is complete; the other, He teaches our imperfection, which is very sinful. He Himself is without spot; his every attribute is holy. Such is His nature that He cannot be tempted of evil; nor can he look upon evil with the least degree of allowance. His garments are clean, His throne is white, His dwelling-place is light. Sin is the disturber of His earth; He hates it; it is the leprosy that destroys His people, and interferes with His plans. On the other hand, we are spotted with evil; we even cherish sin; our thoughts, words, and deeds are run through and through with selfishness and wrong. There is none that doeth absolute good—no, not one. We turn away from the right, we choose the lower in preference to the higher, we refuse to yield to the best influences. All this is true in many respects of every one; of some persons even stronger descriptions could be used, as the drunkard, the thief, the persecutor, the murmur are mentioned. In every instance, even though the best

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among us be thought of, the contrast between God's character and our own character is very marked. He and we are opposites; He is lovable, and we are unlovely. In us are the very elements God revolts from; and they are retained within us because we wish them there.

Here, then, is the wonder of God's character, that being spotless and complete, He feels even an agonizing interest in us, and wishes us, soiled as we are, to give Him our love! He desires every heart that hears of Him, wherever it may be, to know that He cares for it unceasingly; it may be in affliction, in distress, in loneliness, in disgrace; but He thinks of it, sympathizes with it, would comfort it, would hold fellowship with it, and would shower love upon it. He makes no exceptions in this assurance of His care; the heart of the lowest and the heart of the highest is dear to Him; the heart of the prisoner, the heart of the jailer, of the foulest, and of the purest. Nor does He make any qualification in this assurance; men may disobey Him, resist Him, defame Him, and still He is their friend, and is ready to do for them everything that their hearts need.

In all the world there is nothing that so

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appeals to the human heart as the assurance that it is loved by one who is worthy and is lovable. Love is the one thing that the human heart everywhere is waiting for. He who goes most among mankind finds that what their hearts crave is not counsel, not applause, not power, but disinterested love. The knowledge that it is loved is the most powerful leverage that can be applied to the human heart to cheer it, sweeten it, strengthen it. The man who knows he has a mother, pure and true, that gently but unswervingly and self-sacrificingly thinks of him by day and by night, and prizes his good above her highest joy, is helped as he could not be helped by any other earthly knowledge, to keep pure and true himself. And when the human heart is told by God repeatedly that He watches over every step of its pathway with affection, that He is touched by its hard battling, its pain, its failure, that the moan of its sorrow reaches Him and the weight of its cares and responsibilities is felt by Him, the heart has a magnet applied to it that draws it as nothing else even in heaven could draw it, toward the very heart of God. Surely that God is indeed a blessed God who comes to Elijah

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under the juniper tree when he is weary of body and of mind, and feeds him, and rests him, and does everything within His power, as carefully as a nurse with an infant child, to buoy up his heart; He is a blessed God who sees men toiling in darkness and in storm, out upon a wind-swept, wave-tossed sea, and feels for them, and goes through the tempest to them and speaks soothingly to them; He is a blessed God who, hearing that a healed blind man, because he has confessed the truth, has lost the sympathy even of his parents, and is now an outcast in the streets, goes searching for him, and then talks to him gently and assuringly.

One element of that love of God is particularly appealing. The heart of mankind is sore and bruised; it has gone into a far country, despite a father's desire, and has been knocked about by many wrongs, and is poor and soiled. Is God's love for it such that He will *forgive* it? Yes, God will *forgive* it! God will even rejoice to forgive it, if it turn in penitence to Him, and He will do for its comfort and joy all that the heart needs. "Perhaps God can forgive sin," said Socrates, "but I do not see how." What no one else in all the

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universe promises to the heart, what no heathen divinity did promise and no human friend can promise, God promises, that He will forgive sin, and the wrong-doer shall now and always be His dear, honored child. "Yes," God says, "heart of man! I will do for you all that comfort, and sympathy, and care, and love can do for you, and I will rejoice and be happy, merrily happy if you will only let Me be your refuge and father."

But even beyond God's general declaration of His affection to us, there is one special manifestation of that affection through which God makes His last, His supreme appeal to the heart. That special manifestation is through the cross of Calvary. He points to Him who was upon it, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and glory. He asks the heart to remember that this is His Son, His beloved Son, His Son who came from heaven, where His glory equaled His own. He asks the heart to remember what a father's love for his only and precious child is, and then to look at the manger wherein that child lies in poverty; to look at the child, grown to be a man, moving along the valleys and over the mountains, at the seaside and in

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Jerusalem, always loving, always helpful, but always misunderstood, always maligned; to look still further and see whether idle questionings, and evil eyes, and bitter lies drove that Son as He is scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified between thieves, and derided; to look even further, and see the lips of the Christ open in loving provision for John and Mary, in earnest prayer for forgiveness for His persecutors, in tender assurance of welcome to the penitent thief, and then in sublime self-surrender to the temporary power of death!

Yes, the tragedy of the ages was wrought out when Christ came, lived, and went up to Calvary. There is a pathos in the scene of his death, unsurpassed anywhere; never was there a sorrow like this sorrow. But the pathos is not its main feature; its main feature is its evidence of the nature and degree of God's interest in our hearts. It was that interest, that deep, pure, self-sacrificing interest of God in us that brought Christ into our world; it was that interest in us that gave His Son even to the cross, and gave Himself to suffering and agony through that cross. The appeal to us from Calvary is the appeal of a love that shares our sharpest pang, our bitterest

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tear, asking us to let God enter our hearts and abide within them. Ever since that hour wherein God in His omnipotence exhausted all possible means through the cross to tell our hearts of the height and depth, the length and breadth of His sympathetic, self-impoverishing love, He has placed the cross of Jesus Christ before us, and said: "By this and all it signifies let me be your friend and helper. I can satisfy your every need; I can comfort you and cheer you; I can forgive you and enrich you. I can meet every longing and answer every craving of your heart."

The Appeal to the Conscience

It is well known that it was a Roman poet, Ovid, who once wrote of himself, "I see and approve of the better course: I follow the worse." It is not so well known what the character of this Roman poet was. He was an intelligent man, who understood what was safe for himself and for others, but who did what was injurious to himself and to others: he violated the principles of purity, defiling his own life and defiling the lives of those who trusted him. He was a distinctively wicked man.

In this little statement concerning himself he indicates what conscience is: it is that secret testimony of the inner self that approves what it considers right and condemns what it considers wrong. Ovid had within him a power that recognizing some things as better than others, approved those better things, and when he chose the other and worse things, disapproved of his choice. Ovid's statement concerning himself is a statement every human

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being finds true in his own experience; something within him passes favorable judgment upon the doing of what seems to it right, and passes unfavorable judgment upon the doing of what seems to it wrong. There is what men call an arbiter, an umpire, within them that, according to the rules of thought and action it acknowledges, declares whether thought and action are praiseworthy or blameworthy.

The idea of a right and of a wrong, and of the claim of the right upon his allegiance, exists in every one. The son of an Indian chief had been murdered. The murderer, unable to provide a ransom or to escape, surrendered himself. According to the law of the tribe, a remaining son of the chief, in the presence of the assembled tribe, takes a knife and plunges it into the murderer's heart. As the murderer dies his wife rends the air with cries of anguish for herself and her fatherless little children. Immediately the chief, moved by something within him that tells him that while blood ransom is right according to the law of the tribe, compassion for helpless ones is also right according to the law of humanity, speaks out and bids the wife come with her little ones to his lodge where

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he will give them a home and protection. As his words are heard by the tribe, all their voices break forth with the exclamations: "Right! Right! It is right!" Something within them, cruel as they might seem while they were feasting upon the sight of blood, determined for them a standard of right and applauded conformity to that standard. The man is yet to be found who does not feel that there are some deeds which he ought to do and some which he ought not to do. Conscience is the inborn and inalienable possession of every human being.

Even though the sphere of conscience is simply the pronouncing favorably or unfavorably upon the moral nature of our choices and intentions, and conscience is not responsible for the ideas of what is right and what is wrong that are furnished it by the intellect, its sphere is important. Every one is happier and rests more quietly when conscience tells him he has acted a right rather than a wrong. Approbation is always pleasant, especially the approbation of that voice within us that speaks oftenest and speaks longest. "I would rather be right than be President of the United States," is a saying attributed to Henry

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Clay, which has a wealth of wisdom in it; the sense of one's own rectitude of purpose is worth more for peace and comfort than the applause of the whole world. The royal murderer, King Richard, is made by Shakespeare to say in great distress of spirit:

" My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain.

" Methought the souls of all that I had murdered
Came to my tent, and every one did threat
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard."

Conscience thus becomes an impelling force to do the right and leave the wrong undone. It makes "duty" desirable, for when duty is done there will come a judge's commendation of the man who has done it, and hardship and even torture are worth enduring for the sake of that commendation. And it makes neglect of duty undesirable, for sooner or later the judge that is within the man who has been neglectful, will speak out and will condemn the man for his misdeed. No sensible person wishes to go through an experience like that of the Earl of Breadalbane, whose conscience kept ever before him the massacre he foully planned at

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Glencoe, and took from him his bravery, his composure and his sleep; nor does any one wish to have Cardinal Woolsey's pitiful lament ring in his soul, because like him he has violated his sense of rectitude and has sacrificed principle to expediency.

So helpful an aid is conscience to the welfare of mankind that he who shapes his life according to its dictates shapes that life as wisely as he can. Conscience is not always an infallible guide, but it is always a guide to be followed. Under no circumstances may a person go contrary to what he believes to be right; if he does, he injures his whole moral nature. Even though the information concerning right and wrong that is at hand for conscience to act upon be deficient, even though conscience itself for some reason be unhealthy, capricious, accommodating, conscience is still the judge, the arbiter, whose decisions for us must be law. Great harm to others has been done under the leadership of conscience, as Saul for conscience' sake has persecuted, and Torquemada for conscience' sake has forced the Inquisition; but a great harm would also have been done the individuals themselves, persecutors or inquisitors, had they not responded to conscience

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and been absolutely loyal to it. What conscience needs is knowledge and health; knowledge, that it may know matters as they actually and fully are; health that it may be vigorous, alert, quick in its decisions. Such knowledge and such health must be sought by every one who would have his conscience a perfect guide.

But faulty though man's conscience may be through ignorance or through abuse, it never ceases to make a distinction between right and wrong. It continues to exist and to exert a helpful influence, even in the most inauspicious circumstances. When the gods of the ancient world bade their worshipers commit crimes, conscience cried out that crime, even though sanctioned and demanded by divinities, was wrong. If Bacchus asked for debauchery, conscience said that Zenocrates, who would not be a debauchee, was to be commended.

Lucretia was known to be immaculately pure in a time when temples were honored by impurity, and the conscience of Rome praised her devotion to purity. The greatest men of the nation might go through the form of bowing before images of detestable gods, but conscience told those men that they must not be like those gods, detest-

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able. As Rousseau says, "The voice of conscience, stronger than that of the gods themselves, made itself heard and respected and obeyed on the earth, and seemed to banish guilt and the guilty to the very limits of heaven."

All history shows, too, that conscience needs to be reverenced. The conscience of any given moment is to be the supreme authority of that moment. To act contrary to it is to injure it, destroying its sensibility even as searing the skin destroys the sensibility of the skin. The man who so lives as to dull the assertive power of conscience until its voice becomes feeble and rings no loud summons to duty in his soul is answerable for the condition of his conscience. To drink liquor contrary to the dictate of conscience until intoxication ensues, and no voice whatever of conscience is heard, is to condemn one's self. The conscience is the supremely authoritative power in man's nature. No impulse rises so high and pronounces itself so commandingly toward virtue as conscience. To yield to a supposed wrong is to oppose the best influence of our moral nature. While it is a mistake to resist any element of the soul that cries out for virtue, it is the most

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serious mistake that can be made to resist the voice of highest authority that is in the soul.

To this element of conscience, God, in His desire that man should give Him allegiance, makes His appeal. He does this first, through the conviction written in the human heart that sin is unnatural. Wherever deformity is found it is called abnormal. Men with twisted feet or distorted faces or hunched backs, and animals and flowers with decided misgrowths, are unnatural. Lunatics and maniacs are also unnatural. So the human heart declares that moral deformity is unnatural; that to love God, the lovely, is natural, to love evil, the unlovely, is unnatural. It is contrary to our very conviction that when the harm of wrong is seen we should choose wrong, and contrary to the same conviction that when the benefit of right is seen we should reject right. To prefer the less to the greater, the worse to the better, is an obliquity of judgment. Were we stationed in some other sphere where we could watch what is being done upon this earth, we should feel, every time we saw a person committing a sin, that he was acting as a man without control of his reason—like

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a fool, like a madman. It is natural for a man to choose the beautiful rather than the hideous, the pure rather than the impure, the healthy rather than the unhealthy. All this is what God calls "the law written upon the human heart." God now takes that law, and through it He comes to conscience, conscience that is ready to approve the right and the doing of the right, and He presses home upon conscience Himself in all His beauty, and asks conscience to choose Him rather than evil in its hideousness. He calls to conscience to discriminate between the natural and the unnatural, to listen to the conviction of the human heart that makes the choice of the good natural and the choice of the evil unnatural, and to pronounce in favor of that benevolent One who seeks the good and only the good of man. Malvolence, as represented by the Evil One, is to be feared, not chosen, God argues. "Put yourself," He urges, "into harmony with your being, come into conformity with what is reasonable, and love Me, the true and the blessed, for it is a crime against nature to disapprove Me, and it is fidelity to nature to approve Me."

God also appeals to conscience through

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His revealed will. Conscience needs knowledge; God furnishes that knowledge in His written laws. Those laws are of such a nature that He expects conscience to recognize their worth and beauty, and act upon them. They are perfect laws; every one of them is good. The temporary laws given through Moses to the Israelites as they emerged from Egyptian bondage, are based on principles serviceable to private and public welfare. The separation of beasts into clean and unclean, with the command to offer only the clean to God, taught the people the need of personal holiness if they wished to please God and possess worthy character; and conscience can but approve such a command. The permanent laws that teach honesty, brotherly kindness, purity, freedom from covetousness, whenever presented to conscience commend themselves to conscience, and commend, too, the God who gave them, because they are recognized as essential to the safety of society. Here, then, is open-eyed conscience looking out for the good, and God presents to it statement after statement of His desire that each and every virtue should be chosen, and each and every vice should be shunned. He presses

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home these statements by attaching to them every possible incentive for their performance. He paints the essence of evil in the blackest of colors. He makes the personification of evil, Satan, a traducer, a tempter, an enemy. He shows that the choice of evil eventuates in loss of character, loss of self-respect, loss of reputation, and loss of the peace and fellowship of God. He sets forth the effects of evil within the soul itself, making the soul a bond-slave of evil, a den of demons, an abode of despair.

Then He presses upon conscience the opposite effects of good that result from obedience to His laws; He shows the blessedness of having life in harmony with the will of the universe, of having God's indwelling joy and doing His blissful service, of growing into fitness for Heaven, and finally of entering Heaven itself with its answer to our every highest intellectual, moral, and spiritual wish. What an appeal all this is to conscience to pronounce in His favor! It is a conclusive argument; it bears in upon conscience with commanding force. To make it the more easily understood God adds illustrations to it, so that concrete cases shall show that disobedience to His laws always ends in sorrow,

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and obedience to those laws always ends in happiness: Cain cherishes hatred, and becomes a sufferer; Saul disregards wisdom, and becomes wretched; Judas sacrifices the good for the evil, and becomes an outcast. On the other hand, God shows that the men and women who were true to His high ideals were heroes; that even if they suffered like Daniel and Stephen, they had the priceless boon of pure souls, they had His constant benediction, and they entered into His eternal reward. And then God brings the statement of His revealed will to its close in the book of the Revelation, wherein He sets forth the conflict between the good and the evil, and declares that the outcome of that conflict is the complete overthrow of the evil, and the unending triumph of the good. Thus God assures conscience that His will shall prosper, and all that is contrary to His will shall fail.

God still further appeals to conscience through startling providences. When Luther, at Erfurt, heard one morning that his intimate friend, Alexis, had been assassinated, the sudden loss of his companion aroused him to serious inquiry concerning the rightfulness of his life. Later, when

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he was returning from Mansfield, and was overtaken by a violent storm, and a thunderbolt sank into the ground by his very side, he saw the necessity of devoting himself to that which in the hour of death would be satisfying, and holiness presented itself more attractively to his conscience than ever before. It was a divine appeal to Belshazzar's conscience that God made, when in the midst of a feast, that Belshazzar knew to be shameless, God caused a finger to write upon the wall the words that declared judgment to be on Belshazzar's track. Similarly God spoke to Herod's conscience when Herod, contrary to his conscience having put John the Baptist to death, and now hearing of the miracles of Christ, is agitated by a sense of his sin, and thinks, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead," and wonders whether John has come back to vex his murderer! Conscience never dies. It may long lie dormant, but God is sure to awaken it. He sends some event to arouse it—a pestilence, a sudden danger, a great disappointment, a serious illness, a grave responsibility. When Ananias and Sapphira fell dead because they were wrong-doers the conscience of every onlooker was quickened.

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"Dishonesty and deceit are to be avoided, honesty and fairness are to be chosen," was the message of the event. There is no community so quiet, and no life so hidden, but that God sends into them events that startle conscience and make it realize that He is a God of judgment, who will not suffer evil to go unpunished. Through such events God appeals to conscience to pronounce in favor of Him whose law is righteousness and whose protection is safety and peace.

God has still another means, the means of the Holy Spirit, by which He appeals to conscience. It is the Holy Spirit that convinces of sin. Every time conscience is aware that sin is in the soul, the Holy Spirit has brought conviction to conscience. It is a large part of the work of the Spirit thus to quicken conscience. The Holy Spirit leaves no conscience unreached. The instrumentalities He uses to that end are many and are diversified; but they, each and all, are sufficient. Sometimes He sends a Nathan to a man like David whose conscience has been lulled into insensibility, and Nathan speaks so penetratingly that David awakes to a realization of his wrong, and beseeches God to forgive

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him. Sometimes He sends a letter, in which are written words that tell how a parent, whose good wishes were despised, loved the child, and thus summons conscience to shame and repentance. Sometimes He sends an entreaty in book, or in sermon, or in the conversation of a friend that makes duty so clear that conscience sees it and approves it, and feels the very will of God urging it toward duty. Whenever in any soul there is the conviction "I ought to be a better man than I am; I ought to be God's man," the Holy Spirit is pleading with conscience.

God's last appeal to conscience is made through Jesus Christ. God presents Him in His spotlessness before conscience. As when perfectly white cloth is brought near that which bears stain and soot, the contrast makes the stain and soot the more offensive, so the absolute sinlessness of Jesus Christ deepens within conscience a sense of its wrong. "Depart from me," said the still selfish Peter, as he saw how stainless the Christ at his side was, "for I am a sinful man." The perfect character of Jesus Christ lights up in the soul, with microscopic distinctness, the consciousness of secret evil more perfectly than any code

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of precepts ever devised. In the strength and completeness of His life there is condemnation for all that is weak and faulty in man. Christ brings to conscience the greatest revelation of sin it can know; He uncloaks the soul and shows the soul its own sin; He makes judgment upon sin a real, because a present and an ever-present, fact.

But Christ brings, beside a revelation of sin, a cure of sin; He brings a pardon and an antidote. He assures conscience that sinful though man is, God stands ready to create the clean heart in man and save him from the guilt and power of all his sins. He avows to conscience that the very blood He shed on Calvary is evidence of this willingness—yes, of this eager desire on the part of God to meet all the needs of conscience with a free, full, and eternal pardon. “No sin,” he declares, “is light; it is wretched and ruinous.” “But,” He adds, “no sin is invincible; the grace of God can conquer it, render it powerless; the grace of God can speak peace to the most sin-oppressed conscience.” And then He bids conscience look upon Him, the very Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and *know* that if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive

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us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It is with earnest, tender, pleading entreaty that God appeals to the conscience to heed His persuasions and pronounce in favor of Him and His beneficent service.

The Appeal to the Memory

A man of eighty years of age was lying one summer day beneath a tree. It was a Sunday morning. He was thinking of anything that came into his mind. Just then a bee flew among the clover that was around him, and began its buzzing. The buzzing attracted his attention. Somehow, as he listened to it, the memory of a day more than sixty years in the past came back to him; he remembered how the bees buzzed in the churchyard of his youth, how they buzzed on that special day when a friend sat down beside him among the clover and asked him to be true to his highest ideals of life, and how he trifled with conscience that day and was disloyal to it. He was a youth in England then, and now he was an old man in America. But as memory called up the past, and he heard again the earnest words of his friend, those words came to him with great force, and lying there beneath the tree he yielded

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to their influence and consecrated himself to all that those words sought.

The power of memory whereby we recall objects and ideas that were once before the mind is both marvelous and blessed. It can go back into the past as into some dark continent, and like a Stanley searching for a lost Livingstone, it can search for a name, for a fact, for an idea, until at last it comes upon what it once heard, felt, or knew, and then it can triumphantly bring it out from its concealment and show it in clear light. It can make days long dead thrill with life again, can fill with people houses that have been tenantless for generations, can hear the voices that no mortal ear has heard for scores of years, and can see the faces and feel the touch of those whose gravestones are moss-covered.

All this the ordinary memory of any one can do. But beyond the ordinary memory of all is the extraordinary memory of some. Men like the historian, Grotius, and the religious writer, Pascal, are said to have kept in mind everything that they had ever read or thought. Themistocles is mentioned as calling by name each of the twenty thousand citizens of Athens. Be-

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fore the days of printing, when traditions were preserved only in memory, large demands were made upon memory, and memory responded to those demands, retaining with absolute accuracy dates, places, and facts that covered hundreds of years and pertained to minutest details. For many centuries the whole Talmudic literature, that includes all sorts of writing about the Hebrew Scriptures and about the interpretation of its laws—a mass of literature exceeding many times in bulk Homer and the Bible and the Vedas of India, was handed down orally from one memory to another memory. Even to-day in India, where writing has been in use for twenty-five hundred years, the Vedic traditions are not trusted to it. Those traditions are learned from the lips of a living teacher. So perfect has been the perpetuation and transmission of these traditions that the teacher can open his memory and find any passage, any word, and any accent that may be desired. The memory is sometimes, by native gift or by acquired power, so unusual that in certain cases it can repeat five hundred words of an unknown language after hearing them twice; can listen to poems for days in succession and

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reproduce each as fast as heard, and can read histories, and can give every paragraph and line with unerring certainty.

Such extraordinary memories simply emphasize the wonderful nature of memory itself. It is memory that enables us to profit by past experience. Without it we could never advance from failure to success—excepting by the merest accident. The mechanic, not recalling his mistakes, would commit them over again; the sailor would have no home port to which his heart and his boat could turn back; the human mind would have in it only the swiftly fleeting impression of the immediate instant, and so would be without reserved resources of any kind. Should memory cease to have its part in our lives, progress would become a word without a meaning, gratitude would be impossible, family circles would have no ties of unity, all the sentiments of mind and heart would be without a base of support, and life would be chaotic, each individual balancing on a point which had no suggestion of a past and no suggestion of a future. So essential is memory to the happiness and well-ordering of human life that it is called “the golden thread that links together all

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the mental gifts and excellencies." Their practical value depends upon memory.

The great importance of memory makes it desirable that memory should be imperishable. So long as we live we need the profit of experience. Memory never dies. The seemingly forgotten is often recalled. Deeds that have not been thought of for half a century may start up in a moment. A whole lifetime may pass before mental vision in seconds. Persons falling from windows have reviewed their entire lives before reaching the ground. Poems unrecited since childhood recite themselves in age. In special cases of disease whole pages of books read many, many years ago are repeated, though it was thought not one word of those pages had been retained in memory. Let the proper circumstances arise for the awakening of memory, and memory will assert powers that were so long dormant as to be considered dead. Memory is, as De Quincey said, like a palimpsest, one of those old parchments whose original writing has been rubbed down and obliterated so that other writing might be placed upon the seemingly blank page, but which upon the application of the proper chemicals reveal their first writing.

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Memory may be written over and over again until only the last writing is seen when attention first is directed to memory; but every writing is written indelibly, and can be brought to light. There is not a thought, a purpose, a deed, which has failed to stamp itself somewhere upon memory, and all that is needed is some event that shall uncover what is above them, and lo! they will stand forth as clear as though they were a part of yesterday and not of twenty years ago.

This power, so marvelous in its nature, so necessary to human welfare, is one of God's chosen instruments to draw us to Himself. The Israelites upon the farther shore of the Red Sea looked back across the water, and that look-back taught them God's protection for those who had allowed Him to guide them, and God's overthrow for those who, like Pharaoh's hosts, had resisted His will. And the look-back has ever been a means used by God to enforce the thought of His promised blessings and of His predicted penalties. If memory will only recall the past, God is sure that men will see that He is the God of history, and that they have reason for believing in His faithfulness. At every great crisis in

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the experience of Israel He summoned the people to "remember." When Moses was to die, He bade Moses gather the whole nation and then rehearse their past—their past, with its difficulties and its deliverances, with its gracious interpositions for their welfare when their heart was true to Him, and with its firm punishment of their misdeeds when they rebelled against Him, and then by means of memory He showed them that no strange god had been with them, but a wise, good God, whose heart was tender and patient, and whose hand was mighty and bountiful. Again, when Joshua is to die, and another very trying hour has come in the life of Israel, He bids the tribes gather as of old, and then one by one He caused Joshua to make a re-statement of all the words God had spoken concerning Israel during Joshua's leadership. When memory had all these words before it, He asked, "What one of all these words has failed?" Memory knew that not one had failed; and so God, through memory, tried to persuade Israel to rely upon Him, the unfailing One, and submit to His guidance. Later, God made the same appeal to David when He brought him face to face with Goliath, and then reminded him

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of the lion and the bear out of whose paws He had once delivered him, and so gave him reason for trusting Him in this new emergency. Later still, when Peter was in danger of being impatient with weak humanity and of losing his love for them, God reminded him how in the time of Peter's own fall God was patient and loving with him, and that remembrance cheered and sweetened Peter's heart. The memory of trials overcome, gives courage for new undertakings, and the memory of injuries pardoned, gives sympathy for the sinful.

One of the means God sometimes employs to arouse memory is trouble. When everything at their hand is just as men desire it, they are fascinated by the present; when the present is somewhat unsatisfactory, but everything seems to be coming toward their hand just as they desire it, they are fascinated by the future. Such fascination is a peril only when it so absorbs the soul that the soul feels no need for God Himself. With all our wants met and our ambitions gratified, with the star of hope rising higher and higher upon our pathway, and with no pressing consciousness of any unfulfilled lack in our lives, it

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is easy to forget God and His ideals. Then it is that God steps in and checks the career of success. He brings forward circumstances that make the present disappointing and the future uninviting. He makes it easy and even necessary for the thought to turn back to Him. The prodigal son had no longing for a father's love and all the pure joys of a father's home so long as money held out, and companions praised, and life was merry. But when money failed, and friends deserted, and food gave out, when no one helped him, and it was evident that no one would help him, then memory called up a picture of the good home, the abundant table, and the father's love, and in his distress the son heeded the voice of memory and turned homeward. Just as a little child wanders in the fields, chasing the butterflies and pulling the daisies, and never thinks of its danger so long as daylight lasts, but when the sun declines, and the shadows deepen, and night comes on, becomes aware of its loneliness, and remembering the place of safety and love, wishes to be there, so the human heart comes at last to hours of need that remind it of God and make it wish His protection. Manasseh remembered

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God when he became a captive at Babylon. Hezekiah bethought him of God when Sennacherib threatened his destruction. The taking of a beloved child to Heaven often directs eyes that have been looking parallel with the earth, straight up toward the skies. Other helpers fail, and then the unfailing Helper is remembered. God never allows any life to have an unchecked career of prosperity. He gives a disappointment at school, a failure in sport, a slight in society; He gives a loss in business, or an illness in the home, or a misunderstanding among friends. Hours of sorrow are not sent because He is glad to send them, but because through them He wishes to make the thoughtless thoughtful and incline their hearts to seek Him. In these hours He calls to memory to remember Him and His goodness, and then to come to Him and have His comfort.

Another means used by God to arouse our memory is His description of His own memory. He never forgets. Every one of our words, of our thoughts, of our acts is recorded in His memory. Nothing that men can do can efface one writing in God's "book of remembrance." If a cup of cold water is given in His name, the letters that

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register it are indelible; millions of foes may attempt to ruin the reputation and character of the giver, and may drag His name in the lowest filth, but they cannot blur one smallest iota of those letters. This "book of remembrance" contains a record of surpassing importance. Every instance of a kindly thought of God, every instance of a kindly reference to God is noted there; so, too, is every feeling of sympathy, every deed of compassion, every step of humility. But it has its debit column as well as its credit column. Every instance of wrong is noted there—the lustful look, the hateful desire, the idle word, the weak vacillation, the petty selfishness, the impatient murmur. The sins unknown to our fellows, the wrongs committed years ago in other communities and never mentioned to us, the mischief wrought to tender consciences that made them weaker ever afterward—all these and many more may be forgotten by us for the time, but they are never forgotten by God.

To some men their past is a haunted chamber; all sorts of disturbing memories are in it; to enter it is to face the specters of evil. To all men their past is at least condemnatory; it is stained; it needs for-

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giveness. The stoutest heart is dismayed as it thinks of an hour when every wrongful thought and every envious wish shall be brought forth from their concealment and displayed in the presence of men and angels; when God's book shall be opened and read, and our own memory, that infallible autobiographer, shall tally with every secret then declared! What shame of spirit will be ours then, what sense of failure!

With this great thought of His own unfailing memory before us God now comes to our memory, our memory that has reason to dread God's memory, and He tells us that if we will but repent from all wrong and let Him be our redeemer and advocate, He will Himself assume the shame of our sins, He will cover them with His hand, and they shall never be mentioned against us; He will write our names in imperishable letters of light in the "book of life," and, clearing the record, will present us faultless before the throne of the majesty on high!

God also arouses the memory by visible objects. There may be a little worn shoe put away in a bureau drawer, and one day as a mother is looking through that drawer

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the eye falls upon the shoe. In an instant the memory of her baby child fills her thought. She sees him as he was before the fever came and stopped his play. She sees his smile and outstretched arms. She sees every incident of his sickness, every incident of those last hours when she tried to keep him in her arms, but was permitted to keep him only in her heart. Edmund Burke in the evening of public life lost his only son, at the age of twenty-one, a youth of the rarest genius and varied accomplishments. One day long afterward, the favorite horse of the young man came up to Mr. Burke as he was standing by the stile, and, as if in expression of his mute sympathy, put his head over the shoulder of the bereaved father. Overpowered with the memories thus awakened, Mr. Burke burst into tears.

God has always known and used the power of visible reminders. He placed a memorial altar at Rephidim when He made Israel to prevail over Amalek, so that all who in after times should see it would be reminded of the assistance given His people in their dire need, and would trust Him as the God of battles. He instituted the Passover Feast, and commanded that once

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a year every family should gather all its members about a slain lamb, and then as they gazed upon the lamb the father should describe how God brought Israel out of Egypt on the night when the lintels were marked with the blood of a lamb. Thus through memory of a past deliverance He appealed to Israel still to believe in Him as their Redeemer.

And to-day He makes use of visible helps that shall stir memory and lead the soul to Himself. Baptism is such a help. Every time the rite of baptism is witnessed, memory is reminded that the life needs cleansing if it is to be free from the stain and power of sin; and baptism calls on every one who sees it to open the heart to the purifying and sanctifying work of God's spirit. The Lord's Supper is also such a help. Over the bread and wine that symbolize the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ is the inscription, "This do in remembrance of Me"; and the Lord's Supper calls upon every observer to think back to Calvary and to Him who went up thereon and poured out His life that sin should no longer have dominion. Jean Paul Richter came to the Lord's Supper for the first time, and he wrote of

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it: "I left it with the purity and infinity of Heaven in my heart, with an unlimited, gentle love which I felt for every human being, with affection for all who were with me there." God has appointed this feast that through it He may reach memory and bring to mind the unspeakably great love which went through death itself to win us to His salvation.

Nor does God cease His appeal to memory with visible helps. He has an invisible help, in the Holy Spirit Himself, a part of whose mission it is to put men in remembrance of the past. He inspired the memories of the apostles so that they recalled the words Christ had said in their presence months and years before, and through those words He persuaded them to believe in the truthfulness of Christ's claims, and through those words He enabled them to write out an accurate statement of Christ's sayings. "He brought all things to their remembrance whatsoever Christ had said." When He was risen from the dead His disciples remembered that He had predicted His resurrection; then they believed His word.

The Holy Spirit never ceases reminding us of those things that we ought to heed.

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He causes words spoken by a friend or parent to reappear in our thought, and plead with us to be true to God. He makes us remember the affectionate counsel given by a teacher, the earnest entreaty spoken by an old companion, the rebuke sent by a holy man of God. Every time voices come out of the past, calling to us to be loyal to God, they are sent to us by the Holy Spirit.

A boy only a few years old was brought to his father's death chamber. The godly man drew him close to the bed, gave him a tender farewell kiss, and then laying a trembling hand upon his head, uttered a blessing, giving him solemnly to God. "Remember," said he, "that your dying father kissed you, blessed you, and gave you to God." All through life the memory of that act and those words lingered with the boy. In youth temptations came, but he said, "No; I must not do this, for I am the boy that was kissed, and blessed, and given to God." Many times he thus resisted temptation. Then later on in life great burdens came to him. He thought: "I must not succumb to these sore trials. The Lord has not forsaken me. There must be something good yet to come out

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of all this darkness and bitterness, for I am the boy that was kissed, and blessed, and given to God.''' At last he went to the insane asylum, where he spent several years. In his brighter moments he would say to his daughter: "Here I am, shut away from those I love, in this far-off place; I am very lonely. There is no one to sing to me. All seems dark. It is a strange Providence!" Then would break upon his mind again the dear old sacred memory, which the Holy Spirit brought him, and he would add, "Yet it must be right, for I am the boy that was kissed, and blessed, and given to God."

Well may we thank God for memory. John Newton, with his health almost gone, could remember two things: one that he was a great sinner, the other that Jesus Christ was a great Saviour—two things, but they were of greatest importance. "When I try to make myself an infidel," John Randolph said, "I fancy I feel the hand of my mother on my head, and her voice sounding in my ear as she taught me to say, 'Our Father who art in Heaven.' " Yes, memory is a blessed means of good, if used aright; but if used awrong it carries with it a fearful responsibility. It is

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that element which in retribution supplies conscience with material for its remorse. "Son, remember!" is said to him who had wasted his opportunities, misused God's gifts, and disregarded God's love. Memory brings despair to those who ruin their lives.

And so God appeals to us to remember His care and love, and accept them; to remember His wise precepts, and live them; to remember His assurance of an eternity, and then to see to it that in that eternity ours is the memory of a life spent in devotion to His blessed will.

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It was a moment of revelation to George John Romanes when the thought flashed through his mind that as he believed in the love of his mother toward him, so he might believe in the love of God toward him. He was a hard-working, brilliant student in natural science. He had been accustomed to things that could be seen and handled. He would put them under the microscope and look at them, or would put them in the scales and weigh them, or would compute with mathematical figures what they could do. It seemed to him as though human life must be considered and explained on the basis of visible, tangible, computable things; as though faith in an invisible God and confidence in His love toward him could not be expected from an exact mind. But when he bethought him of the love of his mother toward him, a love that belonged to a part of his life with which the microscope, the scales, and the computa-

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tion tables had nothing whatever to do, and then let his imagination suggest to him that the love of God was like that mother's love, only greater, tenderer, purer, George John Romanes gave up his doubt and entered into happy confidence in God. This change came about simply because he remembered that one element of his nature believed in things like love, that are invisible, and then because he let imagination lift that element of his nature from the mother whom he had seen, to the God whom he had not seen.

It would be unwise for any one desiring to influence himself or another to overlook the place of imagination in man's inner being. Napoleon asserted when, at the outset of his career the government of France, called the Directory, devised methods of procedure that dealt only with visible facts, that "the government could not last because it did nothing for the imagination." He claimed then and always that "imagination rules the world"; that the thing desired is more powerful than the thing possessed, that the changes, surprises, glories, pictured to the mind as possible have greater influence than what is already realized.

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Every period of human life is equally under the sway of imagination. Childhood finds its delight in arranging chairs in due order, calling them a train of cars, appointing a conductor, starting and stopping the train, and shouting the names of stations. The sports of children are little romances, composed and acted out by the inborn imagination; the "playing horse" with a stick, the doll party with its name for each one of the company and with its delicious dishes of dainties. Youth, too, finds its delights in imagination. Richard Whittington, when a penniless boy, sat down beside the road leading into great London-town, and seeing the Lord Mayor, in rich clothes and with brilliant equipage ride by, had a vision pass before him when he himself would be Lord Mayor, and that vision never faded from his sight. As youth begins to understand the value of power, and of wealth, and of learning, imagination comes forward and creates scenes in which youth does some mighty deed, or prospers in some great venture, or wears some crown of literary reward. Nor is maturity uninfluenced by imagination. Grant was a cadet, started in his manhood, when Winfield Scott, the commanding Gen-

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eral of the United States army, visited West Point, and when Grant saw him, there came to him an anticipation of the time when he would occupy the very position held by General Scott. Mr. Gladstone once said, "I am leading a dog's life." Lord Houghton answered, "Yes, you are leading a St. Bernard dog's life"; and immediately the picture of the St. Bernard dog, rescuing and saving the needy in the snows of the Alps, put heart and courage into Mr. Gladstone. Even age, too, is swayed by imagination. Large as is the place reminiscence has in age, it is the future as well as the past that beckons for attention. Promises of rest and assurances of comfort make their strongest appeal to the weary. Those who have been longest on the sea are most drawn by visions of the harbor; those who have wandered farthest in the desert dream oftenest of the oasis.

The importance to human welfare of imagination is incalculable. It increases the vivacity of childhood, widens out the horizon of youth, stimulates the purposeful energies of maturity, and sustains the buoyancy of age. It is a great inventor, leading into new combinations of ideas, new views of facts, new descriptions of life. It

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enabled John Bunyan, shut up in Bedford jail, to see far beyond the walls that confined him, and beyond the persons who were associated with him, and he beheld beautiful meadows and bright streams, companies of human, and superhuman beings too—and then he pictured for others the progress of a Christian pilgrim as he makes his way through spiritual difficulties onward toward the Celestial City of light and gladness. It guided Milton when, with his physical eyes closed to the objects about him, it placed before his spiritual eyes the warfare waged by fallen angels to overthrow the God of Heaven, and enabled him to write out his "Paradise Lost," with its description of things seen and unseen that had never before been presented to human thought.

The realm of imagination is as wide as the processes of the soul. Poets sing effectively only as they look through outward form, discern the inner spirit of things, and then tell the world what that invisible spirit is that they have seen. Painters, too, startle or quiet us, call forth our energy or lull us into repose according as they put before us "a light that never was on land or sea," and make trees to speak,

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and brooks to laugh, and stones to preach. Raphael sat down before the few sentences that describe the Transfiguration and let imagination tell him what the light was "that was above the brightness of the sun at mid-day," and tell him, too, how the transfigured Redeemer and His heavenly companions appeared as they soared above the earth, sustained, as it were, on a sea of glory; and then he was enabled to give the world his latest masterpiece. And sculptors also are dependent for success on imagination. Virgil described the coming of serpents to the shore of ancient Troy, which straightway find the priest Laocoon who had opposed the entry of the wooden horse, and finding him and his sons, wind about them and crush them to death. When the unknown sculptor who afterward wrought out in marble the scene of this death struggle of Laocoon with the serpents, made his marvelous production, he put his own imagination into it so largely that to-day the admiring world must study long to understand all there is in "The Laocoon."

Imagination is a very useful element in human life. Galileo saw a chandelier swinging in the cathedral at Pisa, and then

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he imagined a pendulum that would swing, and lo! he has invented the clock. Newton saw an apple fall from a tree, and then he imagined that some great law of gravitation drew that apple to the earth, and lo! he has discovered the force which holds the planets in their places. Sir Humphry Davy saw that the gaseous damp caused the miner's lamp to explode, and then he imagined what kind of a lamp might be made that would be safe in the miner's work, and lo! he has devised the "safety lamp." Agassiz saw scratches in rocks, and wondering how they came there, he imagined that once a great mass of ice with stones and boulders in it came grinding down over the rocks and left these marks of their path, and lo! he has given the world its glacial theory. Columbus imagined, and he found an America; Whitney imagined, and he perfected his cotton-gin; Jefferson imagined, and he wrote a declaration of independence. It is imagination that causes advance in philosophy, enlargement in business, strife after ideals as yet un-reached. Beauty, statesmanship, morality, all would cease were there no imagination to inspire them. Peter the Hermit, Ignatius Loyola, Wendell Phillips, Pasteur,

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every man who has shaken the world did it with the lever of imagination.

"If you plan to control men," said Maurice Thompson, "you first captivate the imagination." Imagination seems to be prepared by nature itself for an appeal. "She softens distance by her interposed atmosphere, or gives unreal or picturesque effects by her wizard mists; she gilds the horizon with the unnatural lights of the breaking morning, or envelops in the glorious pomp of a splendid sunset; she institutes contrasts which cannot but be noticed, between a scene in its common aspects and everyday garments, and the same when it puts on ideal appearances and wears its holiday attire."

To this imagination, thus open to appeal, evil makes its approaches. Much of the persuasive power of evil lies in the use it makes of the imagination. Evil presents sin through pictures that suggest only the pleasurable. It makes itself alluring because it promises so many and so great delights. It causes wealth, and kingdoms, and applause to pass before the eyes, and then says, "All these will I give you if you will worship me." It paints in brilliant coloring the gratification that will come

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from indulged passion, and thus tempts us to be unchaste, or revengeful, or covetous. It makes St. Anthony, even when he has become a hermit, see bewitching forms that call to him to do wrong. It wreathes the wine cup, and puts a glamour on many an object that seen only as it actually is, would be powerless to mislead.

But God also appeals to imagination. He disputes with evil the approach through it to the soul. It is the great, the uncommon, the beautiful, as Addison says, that cause the pleasures of imagination; the great, because imagination loves to roam in vast expanses and behold limitless objects; the uncommon, because imagination longs for the new or rare, and exults in the discovery of the surprising; the beautiful, because imagination craves that which shall satisfy it, and only beautiful imagery can satisfy it. The great, the rare, the beautiful are the means by which God appeals to the imagination.

The Book which God uses to reach the soul is pervaded from opening to closing with imagination. It speaks of matters so deep that they cannot be sounded, so vast that they cannot be comprehended, so full that they cannot be reduced to speech, so

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sublime that they cannot be described. He makes Himself one whom no eye hath seen nor can see, and still we are asked to believe in Him and love Him. To believe in Him we must imagine Him; imagine, through descriptions given in Scripture, His character and His care, and thus having through imagination created Him, to believe in Him. Any reference that He has ever made to Himself is an appeal to the imagination. If He calls Himself a shepherd, He immediately uses words concerning His provision for those he protects, that make Him unlike any shepherd ever known. Imagination is required to understand how a shepherd sets a table before his flock, anoints their head with oil, and causes them to dwell in the house of the Lord forever. But through imagination the human soul can grasp the ideas of God's care, and love, and bountiful grace thus expressed, and can say intelligently "The Lord is my Shepherd."

So, too, all God's promises are an appeal to the imagination. Two of those promises stand out as preëminently strong appeals to the imagination. One is the promise that this earth shall be redeemed from every curse.

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In all its parts this promise has to do with imagination. The uncursed earth of Eden was such an earth as only imagination can conceive. It was fruitful and lovely beyond any garden in which we have walked. Every sense was gratified, and was unceasingly gratified. There was nothing to hurt nor make afraid. No thorn was there nor harm of any kind. It was ideal, a land of sunshine and gladness, of flowers and gems, of fragrance and glory, far fairer, far richer than our eye has ever seen. Imagination, and imagination alone, can picture it. But the earth that appeared after the word was spoken, "thorns and thistles shall it bring forth," is the earth that we know, an earth of evil men and evil deeds, of sorrow and suffering and death. No imagination is needed by us to see the earth that now is, but it is needed to see the earth that is promised. All creation to-day groans and travails in pain. Nothing is perfect; every beast has its aches and pains, every brightest-hued flower fades, every human being is touched with weakness. We hear of wars and rumors of wars; we see the drunkard, the libertine, the despot; we meet with falsehood, and envy, and hatred. Yes, thorns

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and thistles are everywhere, in the heart of man as well as in the field. But there is to come a change, and such a change God promises, as shall make this a new earth, an earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and where every sound, every sight, every motive that will be known, shall be perfect. Beasts shall no longer be ravenous, flowers shall no longer fade, man shall no longer suffer. "There shall be no pain there; and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; and there shall be no night there."

What this promise means no power within us, excepting imagination, can even suggest. Memory may recall experiences of delight once enjoyed on earth; the view perhaps, from Mt. Rhigi, as at daybreak the summer sun lifted itself above the horizon of snow-capped mountains and poured its rainbow hues upon field and stream, hill and meadow, cottage and hamlet, lighting them with a glory transcendently lovely; the hour perhaps, when friendship was sweet, and the confidences of love brought perfect peace, and there came into the soul a feeling that all mankind was pure—and we looked out on existence and exclaimed,

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"How good it is to be alive!" But at their best these experiences of delight were temporary; we came down from the mountain to the vexations of anxiety, and we exchanged the hour of joy for the hour of weariness. It is to imagination that God therefore addresses Himself when He says, that His grace is to abound much more than sin abounded, that the music of Eden is to be succeeded by a sweeter, fuller music, that every object is to be complete and every person is to be holy, that kings and queens are to be His devoted servants, and that pleasure, true, sweet, abounding pleasure is to be unceasing!

What an appeal this is to the imagination! It calls upon imagination to consider that, little as our earth is among the vast bodies of space, it is the theater where God is working out a superbly sublime purpose. Here, and here alone, has He shown the greatness of His love; here and here alone, has His only Son become incarnate and died. It is toward this earth that the eyes of all angelic beings are directed—principalities and powers of evil, principalities and powers of good. Though our world is but a speck in the limitless sky with its millions upon millions of stars, and though our

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world might seem too insignificant for the God of the universe ever to give it more than a passing thought, God tells imagination that He has undertaken to redeem it from every sin, and that all created intelligences in heaven, in earth, and under the earth are watching the progress of His work. He calls upon imagination to look out and see the countless eyes that are eagerly viewing our struggle, to look up and see His own eye as it rests upon us in love and desire; He calls upon us to look forward and see the assembled hosts as in the day of His victory they gather from every part of His creation, great multitudes of them, and rejoice, men and angels together, over a redeemed earth and a redeemed race. And then He pleads with imagination by the grandeur and joy of that day, by the interest the whole universe feels in our salvation, to let His love melt our hearts and bring us into the number of those who shall be the trophies of His grace.

There is still another promise through which God makes special appeal to the imagination; it is His promise of a place in His eternal home. What that home is He has never described; He has merely told

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us that there is such a home, and that He intends to bring all who are loyal to Him into it. He leaves all that lies beyond death merely outlined; the filling in is to be done by imagination. No man can tell in exact language what it is, to be away from God in eternity, nor what it is, to be with God in eternity. But imagination is not left without guidance when God presents to it the promise of endless life in His presence; it is told assuredly that in life or in death what God requires is a right relation of the soul to Himself. His every wish for us is a wish for our God-likeness. Every influence He brings to bear upon imagination is to lead us into conformity with His will. He told Jacob that his seed should be "as the sand of the seashore," that thus, through imagination's picture of a wondrously large following, blessed through descent from him, Jacob might be inspired to courage, and patience, and noble undertaking. He told Isaiah to say to Israel that all the trees of the forest should come to Zion to beautify it, and camels and dromedaries should come with treasures, and then He appealed to Israel, through imagination, to be hopeful, and trusting, and holy. He tells wicked men

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that they must forsake their wickedness, else they will dwell in outer darkness, where selfishness and sin have their habitation. He tells imagination to picture that habitation and to make it anything and everything that will render sin fearful and hateful.

Thus it is God makes the “outer darkness” or “inner light” of eternity to be decided by one’s own character. When, then, He portrays His eternal home, He makes its central figure to be His own Son, who once trod this earth, veiling the glories of His Godhead within flesh and blood, and wearing perfection beneath the form of a servant. Imagination always requires the finite as the basis of its thought. It is the man Christ Jesus, therefore, that He sets before us as our basal conception of the Father’s house. The atmosphere, the joys, the beauty of Jesus Christ, are the atmosphere, the joys, the beauty of Heaven. Every one there shall think as He thinks, and feel as He feels, and be holy as He is holy; every one shall be like Him, transformed into His image, and forever possessed of complete peace. What it means to be delivered from every evil and to be free to every good, to be associated in closest

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friendship with Christ Himself and with all who have been made perfect, to find ourselves in circumstances where the heart has unlimited opportunity for happiness and the mind unlimited opportunity for development, imagination, and only imagination, can suggest. But God wishes imagination to suggest these delights, and to picture them in the most attractive forms that can be devised, until the hope of Heaven shall be a loadstone drawing us to God by day and by night.

Here is hope's highest sphere. Hope is eminent among life's greatest blessings. It puts nerve into the languid and fleetness into the feet of exhaustion. It causes the sailor in times of peril to see the waiting arms of his wife and little children, and then he tries to outride the tempest and reach his home. It causes men to persevere through difficulties and dangers, and to struggle onward. Hope came to Paul, the prisoner, when deserted by every earthly friend and destined to be cruelly killed, and showing him a righteous God waiting to welcome him and place a crown of life upon his head, kept him brave and triumphant.

So imagination takes the hope of

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Heaven, and through it calls to us to yield to God and let Him bring us thither. We do not need to know one syllable more about the Father's house; what we shall do there, how we shall rule angels, what our glorified bodies will be. All such knowledge is insignificant compared to the one great knowledge that we shall be perfectly holy and perfectly happy. That one knowledge is given, and given in fullest and clearest terms. Imagination appropriates that knowledge, and then pictures our very selves as we shall be when every longing is satisfied and our manhood is complete. The greatest, rarest, most beautiful conception that can be presented to the imagination is perfection of character. Thus it is that the promise of ideal character, in ideal surroundings, with unlimited opportunity for blessed expansion, through happy service, is the last and mightiest appeal the God of Omnipotence and Love can make to imagination to draw us to Himself.

The Appeal to the Self-Interests

In every human being there is an instinct often called the instinct of self-protection. It prompts us to think of our own interests and to endeavor to secure them. It exerts great power in leading men to decisions; it causes them to ask concerning any matter presented to them for acceptance, "Will this thing profit me?"

This instinct is intended to be of great help to us. If a child knows that pain will result from placing his hand in the fire, self-interest tells him not to do so. If a man knows that financial ruin will result from a certain kind of investment, self-interest tells him not to enter upon it. It is an instinct constantly appealed to; all commerce is based upon it; so, too, are all forms of industrial effort. It is the instinct that is called into play in every counting-room, every banking office, every market-place of the world. To act irre-

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spective of it is to be foolish, to act responsive to it is to be wise. A proper regard for self-interest is not wrongful selfishness, but is rightful self-care. Every man is bound to consider his truest interests and to seek them. The holiest saints as well as the brightest angels are not blind to their own welfare. We can love others wisely only as we love ourselves. We must cherish the instinct that ponders what is helpful or harmful to us, else we cannot know how to secure the welfare of others.

Every dealing of God with man has been upon the basis of man's self-interests. He would be glad to have man do right because it is right, and shun wrong because it is wrong. It would be pleasant if man would choose Him simply because He is perfect, and because man as soon as he sees Him prefers the perfect to aught else. But man needs an appeal to his self-interests if he is to do what God wishes of him, and therefore God makes that appeal. When He placed man in the attractive surroundings of Eden He gave him the additional help that came from the thought of his own safety, as He assured him that disobedience would cost him his life: "Ye shall not eat the fruit, lest ye die." It

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was a favorite way with God in dealing with ancient Israel to make two lists: one of specified blessings, another of specified curses, and then say to Israel, "These blessings will be yours if you obey Me, and these curses will be yours if you disobey Me." He even asked attention to the fact that He acted in this manner, as though it was a kindness and a help to them to have Him do so: "I call Heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." He assured Peter, in whom this instinct of self-interest asserted itself, that the man who followed Him should have "houses and lands, brothers and sisters, with persecutions, and in the world to come life everlasting." He repeatedly said that it would *pay* to be His devoted follower, and He made promise after promise of good gifts to all who would choose Him. He did not hesitate to say that self-denial was involved in thus choosing Him, and that the way of His obedience would necessitate the cross, and perhaps danger, and even suffering. But He always made the benefit and the happiness that would eventually result from choosing

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Him to be so great that He could say, "The advantage is on the side of following Me." "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" He said to self-interest, that He might restrain men from evil. "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven" He said to self-interest, that He might draw men to the good. It is a matter that should stir us with the profoundest gratitude that, when we are so susceptible to temporary impulses and hasty emotions, God lays much material at the feet of self-interest, and thus helps us to be prudent, to count the cost, and to prefer the best.

There are two main lines of appeal thus made by God to the self-interests, one, on the nature and effects of sin, the other, on the nature and effects of holiness. Both of these lines spring out of the moral government of God. That government He proclaims to be a fact, a sure fact, and a fact forever. He assures us in very firm and very kind tones that He is God over all, and will never suffer wrong to go unpunished nor right to go unrewarded. He thus answers to a desire inborn in every

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human creature, that there should be a supreme government over our earth, recognizing the good and dealing with it as it deserves, and recognizing also the evil and dealing with it as it deserves; a government that commands the respect of every intelligence at its best personal rectitude.

It does not matter where God writes His laws, whether in nature or in Scripture, they cannot be violated with impunity. He who swallows poison is poisoned; he who jumps into Niagara is carried over the falls. To expose one's self in nakedness to great cold is to suffer; to stand in the way of a falling tree is to be injured. Nature cannot be treated with disrespect excepting at cost. To go contrary to her laws is to be punished. The man that pierces his eye or stabs his heart finds that he must suffer. Nature does not note whether the violation of its laws was committed through ignorance or through knowledge, whether by an infant or by an adult; nature rebukes with penalty wrong, however and by whomsoever done. Sooner or later every affront to the "reign of law" is recognized, and nature, that need not hurry because all time belongs to her, lays a heavy hand on every reckless transgres-

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sor. A man cannot take fire into his bosom without burning his clothes, nor can he touch pitch without being defiled, nor can he destroy his ears and still hear.

But even more significant is God's moral government as written in the laws of Scripture. These laws define what God condemns. To violate any law of Scripture is to imperil one's safety and one's happiness. It is a part of God's fixed purpose that evil shall not prosper. It is useless then for any human being ever to attempt to thwart Him in that purpose. He hates evil; He is bound to secure its overthrow and its extermination. All the forces of the universe are at His command, and He will make stars, and rivers, and winds, and plagues do His service in thus conquering evil. It is foolish to fight against God by doing evil; nothing but defeat awaits the evil-doer. Sometimes this has been tried. A nation has attempted it. Israel did. Israel heard God say that the nation choosing dishonesty, impurity, and irreverence would perish. God even said more; He told the particular sorrows that should come upon His own Israel in case Israel practiced these sins. "The Lord shall scatter you among all

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people from the one end of the earth even unto the other end. Wherever scattered, you shall find no ease, neither shall the sole of your foot have rest. The tender and delicate woman among you shall eat her own children for want of all things, secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith your enemy shall distress you in your gates. You shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord shall lead you."

These were words said in love, while as yet Israel was obedient. But Israel disregarded the appeal to self-interest, so forcefully expressed, and hundreds of years later thought to do evil and escape harm. But the word of the Lord once spoken cannot be broken, and so it came to pass that every penalty thus predicted was realized by Israel; Israel was scattered from its little corner into every part of the earth, until its people could be found everywhere; Israel was disliked by every other nation, and had no rest for its foot; in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, one of Israel's own delicate women was discovered eating in secret the child whose body she had boiled in her caldron; and to this day the Jewish race is an "astonishment" constantly

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quoted with surprise, and is also a “by-word” constantly mentioned with contempt.

It never has paid for any nation to disregard the will of God. Babylon had her message of warning against disobedience to God, but Babylon paid no heed to the message, and she became the heap of ruins that was fore-announced. Nineveh, too, was charged to remember God’s high purposes, else she would come to nought; but Nineveh preferred her own pleasure to God’s pleasure, and Nineveh became a desolation. “In 1838 the State of Georgia stole the lands of the Cherokee Indians, and drove them in midwinter across the Mississippi. There were sixteen thousand of them, and four thousand of them perished in the terrible journey. They were civilized; half of them could read; half of their Georgian neighbors could not read. Chief Ross wrote at the time: ‘Years, nay centuries, may elapse before the punishment will follow the offense, but the volume of history and the sacred Bible assure us that the period will certainly arrive. We would labor to avert the wrath of Heaven from the United States by influencing your Government to be just.’ A quarter of a cen-

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tury passed, and the Cherokee lands became the center of the dreadful war of Secession. Missionary Ridge, the battle-ground, where so many lay dead or wounded, was so named because of the old mission station among the Indians. Georgia in that war lost three-quarters of her wealth. At the close of the war the United States government sent thirty thousand bushels of corn to this particular region to save the people from starving!"

Nor has it ever paid for an individual to go contrary to God's will. Sin is a curse in itself. It is a disease that once received into the system has no self-corrective power; rather, it is reproductive of itself, so that left to itself or uneradicated, it increases in force and in extent. It blinds the eyes to the beauty of holiness, it deafens the ears to the entreaties of God, it weakens the will, it brings the whole nature into bondage to evil. Again and again the punishment of sin in the individual case becomes patent to the eyes of the world. The man who digs the pit for another to fall into, falls into it himself. Jacob deceives his father, and then Jacob's sons deceive their father. David breaks up the home of another through his lust, and a

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little later Amnon breaks up David's home through similar lust. Agrippina puts her husband to death to enthrone her son Nero, and what does Nero do to hold that throne but put Agrippina herself to death. The men who originated the cruelties of the French Revolution themselves suffered those cruelties. The teaching of history is that men who sin are taken in their own sins; of all Israel's kings only eight died a natural death, for they were slain even as they slew others. Roman emperors mounted to power over the dead bodies of their rivals, and their successors stepped upon the very bodies of these emperors when they themselves came to office. The man who backbites is almost sure to be backbitten; the man who lies finds life dishonest; the man who injures receives injuries.

Even if outward penalty is not seen in connection with wrong, wrong never escapes penalty. When "Spain kindled the fires of the auto-da-fé, and stretched victims on the rack, those fires dried the blood out of her own heart, and through the crippling and mangling of others' limbs she herself has never been able to walk erect." When France broke her word to the Hugue-

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nots, in which she pledged them safety, and having persuaded them to come to Paris, massacred them, she brought upon herself a fickleness that has been her weakness ever since. Fulk the Black, Duke of Anjou in the eleventh century, burned his wife at the stake, leading her to her doom dressed in her gayest attire. For fifty years Fulk reigned without a single mishap. But was it not penalty, the penalty of a corrupted, even a fiendish heart, that caused him in old age to hate his own son and fight him until he conquered him, and then caused him to bridle and saddle that son like a beast of burden, and make him crawl, thus accoutred, to his father's feet, while he yelled in fierce exultation, "You are conquered, you are conquered!"

There are far worse things than those the outside world says of us or does toward us. The worst penalty any human life can carry is its own corrupt, wretched self. What a man sows that he reaps; evil produces evil, and there is no more fearful harvest that a nation or an individual can reap than the harvest of envies, lusts, hates, fears, and bitternesses. Fulk's heart was the worst penalty sin could bring him. A man's own nature is often his retribution.

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It is folly to think that penalty can be escaped. It is sin's shadow. At midday, when as yet the sobering twilight has brought no retrospective hour, and sin has not been pondered, the shadow is scarcely seen at sin's side. But when at cool of evening the voice of God is heard walking in the garden and asking about our deeds and bringing us to a consciousness of our disobedience, the shadow darkens and lengthens. No Achan, however long he may conceal his wrong, and however undisturbed his heart may be, can forever avoid penalty. "All roads lead by God's judgment throne, and He is always found sitting there." Whether in time or in eternity, His law is the same; sin carries penalty with it. So long as sin exists, penalty must exist, too. An eternal sin necessitates an eternal sorrow.

Thus it is that God, through the fearful nature and fearful effects of sin, appeals to the self-interest to turn from sin to Himself. "Why will ye die?" he says to men. He points to drunkards' homes and drunkards' graves, to the cells of penitentiaries and jails, to ruined reputations and ruined characters, and bids men see that sin does not pay. He calls the long list of history

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beginning with Adam and Eve, continuing with Cain, moving on to Pharaoh, and Solomon, and Pilate, and Nero, and Lucretia Borgia, and entreats us to profit by their experiences and avoid their errors. He pleads with self-interest to remember that the tendency of sin is to perpetuate itself, and to remember, too, that character becomes more and more fixed; and then by the thought of eternal sin, and eternal sorrow by reason of eternal sin, he asks self-interest whether it can afford to expose itself to such a ruin. He exhausts the resources of time and eternity to persuade self-interest to avoid evil and cling to Him.

But it is not only through penalties that God appeals to the self-interest; He appeals to it also through rewards. He assures us that godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. He tells us that every virtue He asks of us has in it the seed of an earthly blessing. When He gave laws in the days of Moses, He aimed at health of body, health of mind, and health of spirit. The men of Israel who obeyed His hygienic rules were more free from disease than those who disobeyed

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them. To-day His charge is that we look upon our bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost and protect their strength and purity. His precepts call for self-control and calmness of judgment, and thus they minister to mental welfare. He constantly charges us to be joyful, and even makes joy a duty. God means to brighten and sweeten the hearts of all who accept His guidance, and put rest and refreshment into their spirits. Nor is there an active virtue omitted from His list of requirements. He summons men to energy, and courage, and fidelity. He laid before Israel the difficult undertaking of conquering the promised land, and then called upon Israel to develop all the manliness and bravery of which they were capable. He lays upon his people now the still more difficult undertaking of conquering the entire earth with righteousness, and thus calls upon them to be nobly self-sacrificing and devotedly heroic.

For a nation to live God's laws is to practice temperance, purity, and earnestness. Thus to live is to hold a mortgage on prosperity. The nation that gives the first fruits of all its increase to Him and then sustains itself upon the rest is on the way to material well-being. Unless some

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special event like drought, pestilence, fire, war, or persecution comes, the nation that is faithful to God may expect to prosper. And still God does not ask us to count, even in national life, material success as His chief appeal to us. He remembers, as all thoughtful men must remember, that the glory of a nation, as of an individual, is in the *spirit* of its life; when a nation has safe homes, high sense of responsibility, large interest in public good, then the nation is indeed blessed. God now directs our attention to what He has wrought in the world, bidding us compare the homes in which His words are best exemplified with homes in which they are disregarded, and compare, too, the communities in which His wishes most control with those in which they have no influence, and then He asks us, "Is not the balance all on the side of God and of His will?"

The individual who lives as God directs ceases to be a slave to sin and becomes a free man; ceases to be powerless and becomes mighty to do right; ceases to be heavy-hearted and becomes hopeful. God calls the list of His representative followers, and every one of them has admirable traits; Abraham has courage, Moses has

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far-sightedness, Joshua has daring, Samuel has integrity, David has penitence, Jeremiah has loyalty, Daniel has fidelity. The men and women who have been inspired by God have had such patience, such holy joy, such love for others, such devotion to truth, that they could be destitute, afflicted, tormented, and even be slain by the sword, and still give no sign of weakening. Such men and women appear in every new generation that is affected by God's will. "There was rapture in the heart of St. Bernard, St. Francis, Thomas à Kempis, Samuel Rutherford, Robert McCheyne; there was chivalrous loyalty in the heart of Henry Havelock and Charles Kingsley, Frederick Robertson, Charles Gordon; there was deep piety in the soul of David Brainerd, Henry Martyn, Coleridge Patteson."

The coldest mind sees in history God's great wonders. The centuries pronounce for God. Jehoiakim tries to cut the word of God into pieces and burn it up; but neither he nor Decius, nor Julian the Apostate can destroy God's truth. God had a fullness of time in which He brought Christ to earth; never before was the world so prepared for the spread of His teachings as when with the Greek language everywhere

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intelligible, and Roman roads everywhere safe, the Gospel was given to the world. He had a fullness of time for the Reformation, when the discovery of the magnet, of the art of printing, of the telescope, and of a new world, and the general revival of letters and awakening of a keen spirit of ingenuity and enterprise opened the way for the rapid spread of truth. The forces that live and continue in human society are the forces of God's truth; the words that last and prevail are God's words; the memories that are cherished and are most blessed are the memories of those who have been actuated by God's spirit; the joys that most satisfy the human heart are God's joys; the virtues that are to be last upon the stage of action and receive the final applause are the virtues commended and commanded by God.

It pays to do God's will; pays for time and pays for eternity. Every soul that follows God here, cherishing humility and serving high ideals, in Heaven is received to Himself for recognition and fellowship. That soul enters upon an estate of holiness that is fixed. It moves on forever in lines of supreme enjoyment. All its tastes are elevated; all its ambitions pure. High and

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noble thoughts abide within it. Every man who has allowed God to redeem him from sin is in eternity a joy to himself and a joy to all others. He has at command every pleasure and every advantage he can wish. Pearls are there, gold, too, and song, and joyous shouts. It is home for the wanderer, rest for the weary, light for the blind, comfort for the sorrowful, triumphant character for those who long fought with sin. Compared to these exceeding great and eternal glories even the severest sufferings of the present world are as nothing. Loyal hearts enter into and possess the very joy that is the joy of God.

Side by side God thus places the bottomless pit and the heights of glory. He makes the penalties of disobedience to His will as fearful as He can make them; He makes the rewards of obedience as attractive as He can make them. He exhausts even eternity itself in His appeal to self-interests to choose life rather than death.

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On almost every battle-field there is some one spot where the issue of the battle is decided. If the army of defense continues to hold that spot, the defenders triumph; if, however, the army of attack secures that spot, then the attacking army triumphs.

It was so at Waterloo. There was a farmhouse around which the battle surged for hours. The question was, who should control the part of the field where that farmhouse, with its buildings and walls, was. If the French controlled it, they would hold the key to the situation, and French troops would conquer; if the English controlled it, they would inevitably win the day. Backward and forward went the battle about the farmhouse. Troops were massed against it. Cannon and rifle were directed toward it. The thought of two armies centered on that farmhouse. To possess it was to succeed. When at

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last English troops held it and held it firmly, English troops had won Waterloo.

Similarly in every human being there is one element about which the battle of life is fought. It is the will. If good secures that will, good conquers; if evil secures that will, evil conquers. The whole contest of good and evil over our humanity is as to the control of the will. The will is the objective point of all effort to decide human character and destiny. As goes the will, so goes the man—for time and for eternity. Character is finally a choice, and choice is the determination and expression of the will.

The will, when it once has made its decision and become persistent, exerts great influence, whatever the sphere of its operation. Douglas Jerrold was told by his physicians that he must die. Having sufficient clearness of mind to think, he began to think of his family of children who would be left helpless if he should leave them. Then he gathered all his will power together and resolved that he *would* live, if living were a possibility. And he did live for years. Such a case is not singular. Calhoun threw off a fever that threatened to keep him from an engagement to make

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a public address, as he resolved that speak he would. Oftentimes the will power becomes a tonic to the body, arousing vitality and reasserting health.

The saying has become a commonplace, that "all things are possible to him that wills."

It is an exaggerated and unqualified statement of a great fact. The will can do very much; it can face difficulties of every possible kind and resolve to find a way through them or out of them, and often can succeed. Boys who have said within themselves, "*I will* secure an education," have learned to read by a rushlight, have saved pennies enough to buy a book or two, and have become educated. Youths who were bound to get ahead in the world have made a path for themselves where the irresolute have said that it was utterly hopeless to try to advance. The man of the iron will is a fearful opponent; well may he be dreaded in war or in any business scheme. Even if he is baffled for the time, he soon tosses aside discouragement as though it were a feather, and he becomes all alert for new plans and new efforts. What seem to be impassable obstacles to others are to him only whetstones to the sharpening of his

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purpose and energy. And if the man of the iron will be a friend instead of an opponent, his aid is invaluable. He will break chains for us that were considered unbreakable; he will face Pharaohs, and continue saying "Let the people go," until he becomes a deliverer. He will open up a road for us where otherwise we should have been engulfed, and he will crown our lives with gladness when otherwise we should have sunk in despair.

It is not true, however, that "all things are possible to him who wills." The difficulty with the saying is in the word "all." That word is too inclusive. Many things—yes, many more things than men think or dream of—are possible to him that wills, but not "all things." Will as he may, Methusaleh cannot live forever. Death may by a resolve be kept off from us for many years, but not for all years. Weakness at last conquers, and the man who would not succumb lies upon his bed with no power whatever over his life. Alexander once would not listen to the idea of "impossible"; it irritated him. But the Alexanders, Napoleons, Bismarcks, always find that there are some circumstances before which they are utterly powerless,

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and their wills become like weather vanes that flutter with the wind and do not direct the wind. We cannot by will power every time bring the ship in safety to harbor, nor win in contests, nor prosper in business.

And still there is one sphere of life where the will is all-decisive. It chooses good or evil just as it pleases. In that sphere, the sphere of moral choices, its realm is absolutely sovereign and unquestionable. The will cannot decide where a person's infancy shall be passed—in America or Asia; whether his skin shall be black or white; whether he shall have wealth, power, prominence, genius. But it can decide whether he shall follow the true or the untrue, whether he shall make the good his ideal or the evil his ideal. It can decide on his motives, his purposes, his controlling ambitions; it can decide the trend of his being, and can cause his inmost thought—that which remains written forever on his spirit when heart and flesh fail—to be either toward God or away from God.

In this sphere of its actions the will is supreme. No man nor set of men can coerce the will of another; God never even thinks of coercing the will of a human

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being. Man often tries coercion. He creates an inquisition; he places thumb-screws on people; he tortures them to accept his faith, his ideas. But with God the value of choice is in its freedom. Mere outward expression of accepting Him and calling him "Lord, Lord!" is valueless to Him. Unless the will itself, unforced, has chosen Him, the will is not His, and the soul of man has not given Him a free, loyal allegiance. God therefore appeals to the will through persuasions, and only through persuasions. But He concentrates all His thought, and finally all His effort, of bringing man into this allegiance to Himself upon those persuasions to man's will.

His first appeal to the will is on the basis of the will's *privilege*. It may choose life or it may choose death, just as it prefers. It is like a bird in the air, free to move whithersoever it wishes. God constantly reminds the will of the inestimable privilege it thus possesses. He assures every living soul that no person, nor any combination of circumstances, can make that soul evil if the soul does not choose to be evil. Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height,

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nor depth, nor any other creature can separate a soul from God's love if that soul desires God's love. Bad parents, bad teachers, bad companions, even persecutors, do not have it in their power to compel a soul to obey their bidding. Yes, the will's privilege is great; it exalts the value of manhood; it gives it a range of opportunity that is as high as Heaven and as low as hell. Every moral choice is before it for its consideration. Planets cannot wander from their courses; man can. Man can resist the Almighty, acting contrary to all the expressed wishes of God; or man can yield to the wishes of God and put himself in harmony with eternal and blessed purposes.

That we may realize what the privilege of the will is, God reminds us that He created us. In our creation He made a wonderful display of His power. When He called the earth and its inhabitants into being, man was the crowning object of creation. Thus making man He made him for a special purpose, that purpose being that man might answer to the divine will, and be God's companion and friend. Even with this definite and distinct purpose in mind, a purpose that called forth the supreme counsel of God as He brought man

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into existence, a purpose that sprang from a heart that longed for fellowship, still God left man's moral choice free—and man could vitiate the very end God had in view in creating him, if man pleased!

That same purpose animates God in all the work of His providential care over us. He sends night and day, springtime and harvest; He sends all His bounties and all His deprivations to draw our souls into sympathy with His own. His eye is never off us, His heart is never asleep toward us, His arm is never relaxed from us—and all because He wishes that His loving kindness might lead us to repentance and His deeds of love might persuade our wills to draw nigh to Him. And still He never breaks down the door of the will and enters in opposition to our choice. He simply stands at the door and knocks, and though He hungers to come in and be one with us in fellowship, He so respects our will that He continues knocking, as a suppliant, though He has fed us all our life long. Thus we may treat the King of Bounty as though He were an unworthy beggar to whom we disdainfully deny even a crust!

That same purpose animates God in all the work of our redemption. He wished

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to have His children come home and be forever safe and happy with Him. To that end He gave up the treasure of His heart, that which lay within His very bosom, and He surrendered His Son to every experience of peril, pain, and death, so that man might know the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of His love for man, and might be won away from sin to Himself. He told the story of the father's yearning for the return of the prodigal, and the story, too, of the father's entreaty of the elder brother to be a sweet-hearted man. He made the outstretched arms of the Christ on the cross the picture of His own outstretched arms of love for mankind; and then He sent forth His heralds, inspired by the Holy Ghost Himself, to plead—yes, to plead, and plead again and again—with human hearts to let God's love enter and fill them. And still, Creator, Provider, Redeemer as God is, God never forces the human will to do His bidding. Rather, He says to the will: "Behold your privilege! I have made you free, but I have made you free that you might of yourself choose Me. Surely, I who have thus honored you, and whose love and blessedness you know, am the One for you to choose!"

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God's second appeal to the will is on the basis of the will's *responsibility*. The will is under necessity of making moral decisions; it cannot avoid or escape them. A man's choices of good or evil are finally his own. Herein lies his individuality. The best father in the world cannot direct his son's will. It was not President Burr of Princeton College, nor President Burr's wife, the saintly daughter of Jonathan Edwards, that made their son, Aaron Burr; he made himself. They could not make him. They could advise, caution, plead; but it was Aaron Burr on whom at last, when all their words were finished, rested the responsibility of determining whether he would accept or reject their words. Fathers, teachers, pastors, cannot shape the moral career of another; he may not think that they can, nor may he charge them with so doing. Moral careers are the expression of pure self-choice. Responsibility for them cannot be evaded. Pilate may wash his hands, and listen while the people say of his deed, "We assume responsibility for it." But while they carried their own responsibility for what they did, Pilate carried his responsibility for what he did, and no voice, though it were persuasive as an arch-

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angel's, could release him from that responsibility.

It is a very sobering fact that character and destiny thus become a necessary self-choice. The privilege of a free will entails the greatest responsibility that man can imagine for himself; he must—whether he is glad or sorry to do so—make decisions that involve and determine his eternal interests for weal or woe. He is placed in a position from which he cannot extricate himself without a positive choice of good or evil. This position is one in which he finds himself every time a decision between right and wrong is before his mind. Each time a decision for right is made, a trend of will is created toward the right; and each time a decision for wrong is made, a trend of will is created toward the wrong. Indecision can, in the very nature of things, be but brief; all people, like Pilate, find that they must say yes or no, and eventually take a side. Moral questions admit of no neutrality; we must either side with or side against what is known to us to be right. Harlan Page said to a band of young men and young women who in their hearts believed Jesus Christ to be their rightful lord, “Shall I put you down as for Christ or

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against Christ?" and with a note-book he went to each that their names might be placed as they chose, on the page "for" or on the page "against," Christ. Sooner or later moral decisions are forced home upon us. Even when we think we have made no positive decisions, oftentimes we have yielded to influences that speedily carry us toward or away from the right, and tendency indicates choice.

Nor does God state merely the responsibility of the will to make moral choices; He states also its responsibility to choose what it knows to be best. The will, to God, is more than the pilot's hand which holds the wheel and so keeps the vessel in a defined course. The will, to Him, is a moral creature, capable of knowledge and having a character of its own. The will is the pilot himself, with eyes, and ears, and brain, who has indeed a directing hand, but who has also a directing spirit back of that hand, whose duty it is to see that the hand steers the vessel in the safe course. The will is not blind; it knows where rocks are and where safe waters are, where evil lies and where good lies. The will has a moral nature; it can see the good and can recog-

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nize the good. Therefore it is that God lays before the will its responsibility to make choices of the good, and pleads with the will to be faithful to its momentous position and ally itself once and forever with Him.

God's third appeal to the will is on the basis of the will's *welfare*. Man was made for God, and when man is in harmony with God he succeeds; when he is out of harmony with God he fails. Machinery moves jarringly when the piece within it that was designed for one place has slipped from its place, and it moves smoothly when every piece is in its own place and answers to the wish of its deviser. It is folly to go contrary to God's will. Even though God leaves every man's will free, still God has everlasting purposes of His own, that existed prior to man's birth and will exist always. Those purposes are, in part, that right shall always conquer, and wrong shall always be defeated. Those purposes pervade air, water, wind, society, government. The stars in their courses fight against the man who resists those purposes of God. The universe is against the evildoer. No one can prosper that wills contrary

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to God's will. As well might the child expect to hold back the sun from its rising as the human will expect to permanently obstruct the will of God. The human will may, if it please, strive against God; it may raise a clenched fist toward Heaven and defy God; it may violate every known good and may make evil its god. But it will be in vain. The man that runs against God's will runs against the order of the universe. We only destroy ourselves when we act counter to God. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but upon whomsoever it shall fall it shall grind him to powder."

But when the will of man acts in the line of God's will, then there is security. He who yields to God yields to Him who is absolutely good and whose kingdom knows no end. We put ourselves into the keeping of the Omnipotent and Eternal when we let God take us to His arms and heart. For us thenceforward the stars will shine, and the rivers flow, and the angels sing. All things will work together for our good. Life's harmony will be found.

"God's will is like a cliff of stone,
My will is like the sea:
Each murmuring thought is only thrown
Tenderly back to me.

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“God’s will and mine are one this day,
And evermore shall be;
There is a calm in life’s tossed bay,
And the waves sleep quietly.”

And even more than this; to the will that yields to God’s will, God gives helpful strength. God corrects its faults, and heals its diseases, and succors its weaknesses. The will that was obstinate and rebellious He promises to make meek and gentle, while the will that was impulsive and insecure He promises to make wise and steadfast. Thus He appeals to every will to let Him guide it, beautify it, bless it, until—and this is the consummation—the will has become perfect, even like unto His own holy will, and every choice—yes, and every preference—is for the highest and the best.

Here, then, God leaves His appeal. He closes His Bible with a last word of invitation, and that word is, “Whosoever *will* let him take of the water of life freely.” Every persuasion that He has made to the intellect, the heart, the conscience, the memory, the imagination, the self-interests, has been directed toward the will. Yes, it is with the will that rests the priv-

The Great Appeal

ilege and the responsibility of answering to the Divine desire and deciding eternal welfare. All the persuasions of God at last concentrate in the one brief question, “Are you *willing* to be mine?”

As God puts that final, all-comprehensive, eternally-decisive question, men and angels watch with eager hearts to see how it will be answered. There comes a time when God can say or do no more, when even He has exhausted every possible persuasion, and when the individual whom He would win must be left entirely to himself and to the voices God has sounded in his being. That time is the crisis in one's existence.

Some persons have been obliged to struggle hard with selfishness and sin before they could say to God, “I yield my life to Thee.” It has cost some the surrender of their homes, their parents, their property; it has meant to some a wrench that they long remembered, as they broke away from evil habits and hurtful companions; it has been to some the giving up of their ambitions, and even of their chosen pursuits; while still others have gone to God as quietly as the little child who said, “I heard God asking me to come to Him, and I went to Him just as I go to my mother.”

The Appeal to the Will

Whether it be easy or be difficult to choose God is a minor matter. The supreme matter is that we actually do choose Him. Whosoever so chooses Him, letting the Divine desire have its wish, answers to the highest possibility of his being, and makes himself one with Him whose care, and love, and blessedness never fail.

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